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The Gossipy Sex

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

LAWRENCE GRATTAN

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CHARACTERS

JOHN BOWEN
ALICE, *his wife*
MILTON NORRIS
HILDA, *his wife*
PHIL BAXTER
FLOSSIE, *his wife*
CHIEF MASON
MAZIE, *his wife*
ANNA STERLING
DANNY GRUNDY
GERALD KENYON
HAMILTON FOSTER
BRIGGS, *the Butler*
MARTHA, *the Maid*

*The action of the play occurs at the home of Mr.
and MRS. BOWEN. One Summer evening.*

The following is a copy of program of the first performance of "THE GOSSIPY SEX" as produced at the Mansfield Theatre, New York, N. Y., April 20, 1927.

JOHN GOLDEN

PRESENTS

"THE GOSSIPY SEX"

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY LAWRENCE GRATTAN

THE CAST

<i>John Bowen</i>	THOMAS W. ROSS
<i>Alice Bowen</i>	FLORENCE MASON
<i>Milton Norris</i>	JOHN CHERRY
<i>Hilda Norris</i>	EVA CANDON
<i>Gerald Keynon</i>	NORVAL KEEDWELL
<i>Anna Sterling</i>	UNA MERKLE
<i>Philip Baxter</i>	PHILIP BARRISON
<i>Flossie Baxter</i>	HELEN WEIR
<i>Chief Mason</i>	RALPH THEADORE
<i>Mazie Mason</i>	GRACE MENKEN
<i>Richard Foster</i>	GEORGE SPELVIN
<i>Brigge</i>	HARRY FORSMAN
<i>Martha</i>	JOAN CARVEL
<i>Danny Grundy</i>	LYNNE OVERMAN

The action of the play occurred at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bowen one Summer evening.



The Gossipy Sex

ACT I

SCENE: *Living room of JOHN BOWDEN's home.*

On the right is a large fireplace with fender and fire screen. A wing is brought on stage forming a right angle. There is a built-in seat in this wing; above the seat are shelves for books. A sofa faces the fireplace; back of it is an oblong table, left of which is an armchair. An entrance up R. leads to the dining room. In the back wall R. is a large opening leading to porch; a striped awning is seen. Left, at back, is a small arch leading to the hallway; through this arch the stairs and newel post are seen. In the foreground, L. of C., facing the spectator, is a davenport with pillows; right of this a small end table with cigar humidor and matches and an odd chair. Down L. is a door leading to a closet; the upper portion of this door is glass. Odds and ends of furniture are elsewhere in the room. The room suggests middle-class luxury, with a vague hint of poor taste in furniture selection and color combination.

TIME: *It is eight-thirty in the evening of a day in June.*

N.B. *The action is continuous.*

DISCOVERED: JOHN BOWEN, forty, wholesome-looking, easy-going, is seated on chair R., reading a newspaper.

ALICE. (*Offstage, upstairs*) John!

JOHN. Yes, dear?

ALICE. (*Off*) What are you doing?

JOHN. Nothing. I'll be right up.

ALICE. (*Off*) You must be doing something—

JOHN. I'll be right up, I tell you.

ALICE. (*Off*) Oh, dear, I can't get dressed—

JOHN. Where's the maid?

ALICE. (*Off*) She's busy.

JOHN. All right, dear. I'm coming right up.
(*He continues to look at paper.*)

ALICE. (*Off*) No, don't bother. I'm coming down. (ALICE BOWEN, JOHN'S wife, twenty-five, ingenuous, tempermental, lovable, enters from stairway. Referring to her necklace) Will you hook this, dear?

JOHN. I'll try. (*As JOHN is trying to hook the necklace, ALICE goes to dining-room door, JOHN following*) Wait a minute.

ALICE. (*Calling off*) Don't forget to take that off the stove, Mary. (*Doorbell.*) Good heavens, I hope the folks aren't coming here yet. A party's a terrible lot of trouble, isn't it?

JOHN. Well, dear, you started it yourself. You persisted that you wanted to throw this affair. The results are on your own head.

ALICE. Can't you hurry with that hook?

JOHN. I've got it now. (*Kissing her*) Gee, but you look pretty tonight.

ALICE. Don't be silly. (*Enter MAID.*) Who was it, Martha?

MARTHA. Man named Briggs.

ALICE. Thank goodness he's here. Tell him to come right in.

MARTHA. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit MARTHA.*)

ALICE. You know, John, he's awfully hard to get. Everybody wants him.

JOHN. Everybody wants Briggs? What is he—a bootlegger?

ALICE. Oh, don't be silly, dear; he's a butler.

JOHN. Good heavens, you haven't hired a butler?

ALICE. Just for the night, dear.

JOHN. Oh!

(Enter BRIGGS, with a shabby-looking overcoat and a crushed hat. Under coat full evening clothes. MARTHA follows him on.)

BRIGGS. Good evening.

ALICE. *(Pleasantly)* Glad to see you, Briggs. Wait here a minute, and I will show you what to do. *(To MAID)* You'd better come with me, Martha.

MARTHA. Yes, ma'am. *(Exit ALICE hurriedly. MARTHA follows her off.)*

JOHN. *(To BRIGGS)* So you're a butler, eh?

BRIGGS. *(With apologetic cough)* I do butlering and catering for the best social functions about here.

JOHN. Is that so?

BRIGGS. You may not remember me, sir, but I served at the Morgan-Smith affair when you were there.

JOHN. *(Remembering)* Oh, yes—— *(Looking him over)* But you seemed older that night, somehow—didn't you?

BRIGGS. Well, maybe it's this coat—— *(Takes off coat.)*

JOHN. *(Looking at him)* No, it ain't the coat. You look kind of young or something. I don't know just what it is.

BRIGGS. *(With sudden thought, and smiling)* Oh, I got it. It's the headgear.

JOHN. What?

BRIGGS. Why, this, sir. *(He takes a toupe off his head.)*

JOHN. Oh, my God!

BRIGGS. Of course, with it off I do look older.

JOHN. I don't know what you look like now.

BRIGGS. (*Worried*) Well, sir, if you want me to look younger——

JOHN. No, I guess it is a little better that way, and besides it may make the guests believe that you're an old family retainer.

BRIGGS. Yes, sir, that's why some prefer it. Of course, I prefer to wear it, and it's very good when you're in a draught.

JOHN. Have you ever thought of growing a beard?

BRIGGS. No, sir.

JOHN. They say they're wonderful in a draught.

BRIGGS. (*Pocketing toupe*) I don't believe I'll need this tonight, sir. It's warm.

(*Enter ALICE; looks at BRIGGS.*)

JOHN. It's all right, dear.

ALICE. Just hang your things in the hall, Briggs. Martha will be here in a minute, and show you what to do.

BRIGGS. Thank you very much, madam. (*Then to JOHN*) You'll excuse me, sir. (*He starts to exit, sneezes loudly and mumbles*) I'm afraid I made a mistake. (*Exit into hallway. ALICE looks after BRIGGS, then at JOHN.*)

JOHN. (*Laughs*) He wears a toupe.

(*MARTHA enters with flowers, which she is about to put into vase.*)

ALICE. (*Taking flowers from her*) Thank you, Martha, I'll do it. Briggs is out there. You show him what he's to do, Martha. (*MARTHA exits. ALICE arranges the flowers.*)

JOHN. Who's coming to your party?

ALICE. I've invited only a few this time—enough for two tables of Bridge. (*Re-arranges flowers in vase and potters with other things as she talks.*)

JOHN. Is Chief Mason going to bring his young wife?

ALICE. I suppose so—they accepted the invitation.

JOHN. Ever since the Baldwin murder mystery, the chief has been as busy as a little boy whipping snakes.

ALICE. Who do you think killed her, John?

JOHN. The newspapers say her lover. You don't suspect me, do you?

ALICE. (*Laughing*) John, where's Anna?

JOHN. In the garden.

ALICE. Is Gerald with her?

JOHN. Yes.

ALICE. They seem to be getting on together.

JOHN. He'd make her a good husband.

ALICE. Gerald's a good boy. I'm afraid he couldn't support a wife, though, on the salary he's getting.

JOHN. He's not entirely dependent on that. The Norris's have a lot of money and he's their only relation.

ALICE. Not much good waiting for some one to die. (*Goes up with bouquet.*)

JOHN. He may work it out for himself—he's working a lot of stuff—he may become a great writer some day.

ALICE. Not much money in that, either, unless he's a rare exception.

JOHN. Personally, I'd rather see her married to Gerald than to—well—you know.

ALICE. You mean Danny Grundy? (*Comes down.*)

JOHN. Yes.

ALICE. I wouldn't.

JOHN. I would.

ALICE. Danny's going to be a big success some day.

JOHN. Yes—on other people's money.

ALICE. Oh, I don't know, John. Look how he's managed that shaving cream business.

JOHN. (*Grimly*) Yes, I know.

ALICE. He'll turn it into a winner some day.

JOHN. Not a chance. I'll never see that money again.

ALICE. I hope you're not worrying about it. (*Sits on stool.*)

JOHN. I've got beyond that. All the same, if I had that money now, I could pay off half my debt to Norris.

ALICE. There's no hurry about that, is there?

JOHN. My note falls due Monday.

ALICE. Why, John! You can pay it, of course . . . can't you?

JOHN. No.

ALICE. (*Worried*) Ah! That's too bad! What are you going to do?

JOHN. Well, if I get a chance tonight, I'm going to ask Norris to give me another six months.

ALICE. You don't think he'll refuse?

JOHN. I don't know. I had to give him our book store as security.

ALICE. Our book store?

JOHN. Yes. Money is tight just now; he may want the cash. You see, he loaned me that twelve thousand as a favor just for six months. I thought business would surely pick up in that time; but it's going from bad to worse.

ALICE. (*With a tremor in her voice*) John, why didn't you tell me?

JOHN. I didn't want to worry you, dear, but that is one of the reasons why I gave Gerald a position in the store. Mrs. Norris is fond of the boy and

asked me to do something for him. It will be all right.

(BRIGGS enters at main door with a satchel, followed by MARTHA.)

ALICE. I hope so.

BRIGGS. I beg pardon.

ALICE. What is it, Briggs?

BRIGGS. Mr. Grundy has arrived.

ALICE. (*Pleased*) Oh! Where is he? (*Rises.*)

BRIGGS. He's talking with the taxi driver.

ALICE. Put his satchel in the spare room—Martha, you show Briggs where it is. (BRIGGS exits after MARTHA.)

JOHN. (*Rising, somewhat annoyed*) I didn't know *he* was coming.

ALICE. I asked him to spend the week-end with us. (JOHN makes a face.) Why, John, you don't mind.

JOHN. No—no—I don't mind—but——

ALICE. I really asked him on Anna's account.

JOHN. I thought she'd passed him up for Gerald.

ALICE. Oh, no, they've been corresponding right along.

JOHN. (*Walking up and down, L. of davenport*) Here's where we say good-bye to a peaceful evening. (*Crossing L. Sits on sofa L.*)

ALICE. Don't be fussy, dear. Danny's the best hearted fellow in the world.

JOHN. Yes, I know—but talk—talk—talk—gab—gab—gab.

ALICE. But he's not to blame. Look how he was brought up—a houseful of sisters and his old Aunt Ella—and he the only boy. He's taken good care of them, too.

JOHN. Just the same, he causes more trouble with his confounded gossip.

ALICE. (*With a glance of alarm toward main door*) S-sh!

(DANNY GRUNDY, *thirty, alert, thoroughly manly, genial, likeable, enters and comes down.*)

DANNY. Hello, Alice.

ALICE. (*Giving hand*) How are you, Danny?

DANNY. Glad to see you. How've you been?

ALICE. Fine. How's everything with you?

DANNY. Smooth as cream. Howdy, John? (*Going to him.*)

JOHN. (*Giving hand with an effort at cordiality*) How are you?

DANNY. You look sad. What's the matter?

JOHN. (*Uneasily*) Oh, nothing.

DANNY. (*Indicating newspaper in JOHN's hand*) Been reading the comic page, I suppose?

JOHN. (*Forcing a smile*) Yeah—the stock reports.

DANNY. Go right ahead. Don't let me disturb you. (*Turns to ALICE. JOHN sits on davenport, making an effort to read.*)

ALICE. (*Indicating chair, L.C.*) Sit down, Danny.

DANNY. Thanks. (*Sits on sofa L. ALICE sits on chair R.*) Ah! (*Rubbing hands together*) "Back among the old folks once again!" Thought I couldn't get here in time for your party. Had a little deal to close up. But I finished it—grabbed a train—and here I am!

ALICE. Let's see, how long have you been gone?

DANNY. Six months to the minute. Been down South the last couple o' weeks, handing out samples of shaving cream. I've pretty well lathered the whole country now.

ALICE. How's business? (*Sits c.*)

DANNY. It's going all right. It's only two months since I've started the new idea.

ALICE. New idea?

DANNY. (*To JOHN*) Didn't you tell her?

JOHN. No.

DANNY. I've changed the name of it.

ALICE. Changed the name—why?

DANNY. Why—huh! That's the whole thing, Alice. That's what's going to do the trick.

JOHN. (*Doubtfully*) Oh, it will, eh?

DANNY. Yes, it will. Those Dutch chemists had a good thing. When I got the American agency, I got something. There is no shaving cream in the world that's anything like as good. You know that, John—you used it.

JOHN. Yes, it *works* fine, but it don't sell.

DANNY. But it will. When I told you to put your money in it, I was putting mine in it too, and so were the other fellows. They all tried it. They all know it's good. Why, it softens the beard the second you've got it on your face. But what did those Dutch birds call it? Rhinegezicht! There's a hot name for you. Can you imagine any one going in a drug store and asking for a package of Rhinegezicht? But I sat up nights till I thought of a good name for it. What do you think I called it?

JOHN. What?

DANNY. Guess. Try to make up one yourself. Try it, Alice.

ALICE. (*Rises*) Oh, I couldn't think of anything. (*Sits chair R.*)

DANNY. (*Rises*) What does it do? Takes them off, doesn't it? "Take the whiskers off."

JOHN. Is that what you called it?

DANNY. No—I'll tell you what I call it—listen. "Whiskoff." Get it—whiskers off—Whiskoff! I thought it was pretty good. (*He snaps his fingers*)

A combination of the two words—tells the whole story, like Uneeda. There's a fortune in a name. It's the very essence of the psychology of salesmanship.

JOHN. You don't say——

DANNY. Yes, I do. Down at Atlanta, I sold an option on the agency for that territory and they got orders for the stuff coming in fast right now. You're not going to lose a cent on the money you put into that thing. Just take my word for it.

JOHN. I've got to, but I'm telling you I don't believe in your new-fangled psychology. I think it's the bunk. A man wants to buy a shaving cream—not a label.

DANNY. Not on your life. In these days, the name is everything.

JOHN. I'll believe it when I get my five thousand back. (*Resumes reading.*)

(*The Butler is seen coming down stairs and exits main door.*)

DANNY. All right—all right. (*Sitting beside ALICE on stool. To ALICE*) Say—who do you think I saw at the station today?

ALICE. Who?

DANNY. Mr. and Mrs. Norris.

ALICE. Really?

DANNY. They were meeting some friend o' theirs. Hilda looked pretty nifty for an old girl.

ALICE. What did she have on?

DANNY. Eh?

ALICE. What did she have on?

DANNY. Ha, ha! You talk like a woman, Alice.

ALICE. Hilda always wears something new.

DANNY. I only had time to say hello. Have you seen them lately?

ALICE. Oh, yes; they drop in often.

DANNY. Milton's changed since I saw him last.

ALICE. You think so?

DANNY. He's not the same man. I'm afraid his married life is not a howling success.

ALICE. I wonder.

DANNY. He picked the wrong woman, Alice. She means all right, but she nags him almost to death.

ALICE. I don't know much about their private life.

DANNY. They say she bosses him all over the place.

ALICE. Really?

DANNY. Made him cut out smoking and drinking, adenoids, 'n' everything.

ALICE. I never knew that.

DANNY. Charlie Twitchell was telling me.

ALICE. Twitchell?

DANNY. A great friend of mine. You don't know him, I guess. He used to hobnob with the Norrises.

ALICE. Oh——!

DANNY. This is just between ourselves—you know.

ALICE. Yes, yes, of course.

DANNY. I wouldn't have it get around for the world. I'm very fond of Milton; I like his wife, too; I'm only telling you what I heard.

ALICE. From all I can see, though, they seem to be happy together.

DANNY. Some men love to be bossed. Milton is one of 'em. He looks up to Hilda like a mother.

ALICE. She is older than he, isn't she?

DANNY. Ten years.

ALICE. Good gracious! I didn't know there was that difference.

DANNY. The pity of it is the baby looks it.

ALICE. (*Quietly*) Ha, ha, ha!

DANNY. She's a perfect wife, though, morally—

ALICE. Well, I should hope so! No one can say anything against Mrs. Norris's morals. (DANNY *whispers in ALICE's ear*) Danny! (She moves him away.)

DANNY. That's what I hear—she's almost too moral.

ALICE. Too moral?

DANNY. You've seen pictures of ice-cream freezers, haven't you—with icicles hanging all around?

ALICE. Yes——

DANNY. Sweet but cold—that's her. Did you ever notice that raccoon overcoat he wears in the summer?

ALICE. Danny!

DANNY. He does so and she's the reason—— (To ALICE) I just can't get over how well you're looking—John's looking fine, too.

ALICE. That's what everybody says.

DANNY. After all, there's nothing like a happy married life, which reminds me—— (Rises, goes up) Where's Anna?

ALICE. In the garden. She and Mr. Kenyon are enjoying the moonlight.

DANNY. Mr. Which?

ALICE. Gerald Kenyon. You've never met him.

DANNY. No.

ALICE. Nice young man, Danny. I think you'll like him.

DANNY. I don't care much about him. He's supposed to be a writer, or something peculiar, isn't he?

ALICE. He hopes to be, some day. Just now he's clerking in our bookstore with Anna; that's how she got to know him.

DANNY. Clerking in the book store with Anna?

JOHN. Yes, and he's going to come into a lot of money some day.

DANNY. Is that so—that's fine—then maybe I'll—



The Stage of the Mansfield, New York, Set for Acts I-II and III—The Gossipy Sex.

(*Reflectively*) Have you seen this new bungalow they've just put up near the station?

ALICE. Yes. Lovely— isn't it?

DANNY. I see it's for sale.

ALICE. Are you thinking of buying it?

DANNY. Yes. Fellow can't ask a girl to marry him and live under an umbrella. That bungalow would suit me fine. It's right near you folks, too. Would you like to have me as a neighbor?

ALICE. No need to ask that.

DANNY. (*Going to JOHN*) How about you, John?

JOHN. (*Looking up*) How's that?

DANNY. (*Sitting beside him*) I'm thinking of settling down here. How would you like to have me for a neighbor?

JOHN. (*Floundering*) Why, I—I suppose we'd have to—— (*Laughs.*) You think of settling here, you say?

DANNY. Down near the station—that new bungalow there. If I decide to buy it, you can count on seeing me every night. Well, every other night anyway. What do you think o' that, eh?

JOHN. Why, you—you've no idea what a——

DANNY. I just told Alice. She's tickled to death.

JOHN. (*Grimly*) I know she would be. (*Laughs sardonically.*)

DANNY. (*Rises and goes to ALICE*) Did you hear, Alice? John's tickled, too. Nothing like congenial neighbors.

GERALD. (*Off*) Do you like it, Anna?

ANNE. (*Off*) I really love it, Gerald—I think you're so clever.

GERALD. (*Off*) Just a little thing I dashed off.

JOHN. Anna and Gerald seem to be getting along pretty well together.

DANNY. Well, I don't want to cause any trouble between Anna and Gerald, but—well—I can't keep

it back any longer—your sister—and I are engaged.

ALICE. (*Pleased and surprised. Rises and goes to DANNY*) You and Anna?

DANNY. I knew you'd be surprised.

ALICE. When did this happen?

DANNY. A week ago—we fixed it up by letter.

ALICE. Well, of all things. (*Embracing DANNY*) Oh, I'm so glad! (*Crossing to JOHN*) John—just think of it!

JOHN. I am. (*Starts to laugh, in derision. Can't control himself. He goes to dining-room door. DANNY follows him up.*)

DANNY. I know how you feel. When the heart is full, the tongue is empty. (*Looks out in garden*) Anna! (*Exits.*)

JOHN. (*Throwing up hands and comes down*) Ye gods! I'm going to have *that* for a brother-in-law! (*Sits R.*)

ALICE. Why, what's the matter with him?

JOHN. Of all the gossipers I ever heard—he's the limit.

ALICE. He doesn't mean any harm, dear.

JOHN. You heard what he said about the Norrises? Our two best friends!

ALICE. He talks that way just to be sociable.

JOHN. You can imagine what he'll do to this party tonight.

ALICE. Nonsense, John!

JOHN. Every time he comes here, he makes trouble among our guests.

ALICE. Nothing very serious.

JOHN. Mark my words, he'll gum things up before the night's over. (*Rises, goes up L.*)

ALICE. You're not yourself, dear.

JOHN. I'm going upstairs and have a good cry. (*Exits upstairs.*)

(DANNY and ANNA enter from the garden, his arm

around her waist. ANNA is a pretty refined girl of eighteen.)

DANNY. Tell me, dear, why did you send Kenyon to gather flowers for you?

ANNA. Why, don't you know?

DANNY. You might have asked me. (*Sees ALICE.*)

ALICE. (*To ANNA*) And you never told me. (*Kissing her.*)

ANNA. (*Crying*) Well, I meant to—I wanted to surprise you.

ALICE. I'm so happy—— (*Crying.*)

ANNA. So am I. (*Crying.*)

DANNY. (*Separating them*) Here, here . . . What's all the crying for cause I'm coming in the family—there's a lovely crying room in there. Besides, I've got a lot of things to talk over with Anna.

ALICE. I'm so happy, Danny. (*Kisses DANNY, smiling through tears, exits to dining room.*)

DANNY. (*To ANNA*) Now, you stop, too. My, but you look pretty tonight.

ANNA. Do I?

DANNY. You're the most beautiful thing in the world to me. Gosh, how I missed you.

ANNA. I wrote you every other day.

DANNY. Yes, and I wrote you every day—that proves that I love you twice as much as you love me.

ANNA. (*Leads him to chair R.*) Now, Danny, you sit down there. (*Hesitates*) I want to have a very serious talk with you.

DANNY. We're not married yet.

ANNA. Do you remember the last party we had when you were here? (*DANNY smiles at the recollection.*)

DANNY. Yes. I talked too much that night.

ANNA. You promised me then you'd never gossip about people again.

DANNY. I've kept my word, too, Anna. The fuss I raised that night has been a lesson to me. I've been minding my own business ever since.

ANNA. Danny—you've got to promise me something—right now——

DANNY. Anything you like, dear.

ANNA. You've got to give me your word of honor—no matter what gossip you hear—you won't repeat it.

DANNY. I won't say anything.

ANNA. Remember, if you do it again, I won't marry you.

DANNY. Ah, you don't mean that, Anna!

ANNA. Yes, I do.

DANNY. Don't worry, dear. I'm cured.

JOHN. (*Enters*) Oh, Anna, I just heard about your engagement.

ANNA. Danny told you. (*Going to JOHN.*)

JOHN. Yes. (*Sincerely*) I hope you'll be happy, dear. (*Kisses her*) Both of you—— (*Crosses, shakes hands with DANNY.*)

ANNA. We've planned to settle down in the neighborhood, so we'll be near you and Alice.

JOHN. So I hear.

ANNA. I can see Alice every day, and in the evening Danny can come over and play chess with you. Won't that be lovely!

JOHN. (*Blankly*) Yeah.

ALICE. (*Enters, crosses to ANNA*) I know you'll be awfully happy, dear.

(GERALD KENYON, a young man in the early twenties, rather pale and esthetic-looking, enters at window with a handful of garden flowers, which he presents to ANNA. He wears shell-rimmed spectacles.)

GERALD. Here they are.

ALICE. Come right in, Gerald.

GERALD. (*To ANNA*) Allow me——

ANNA. Oh—lovely! Thank you.

GERALD. (*To ANNA*) Your garden looks charming in the moonlight.

JOHN. Glad you enjoy it.

GERALD. It's inspirational—it gave me an idea for a new poem.

JOHN. That's fine.

ANNA. Danny, you really must read some of Gerald's poems.

DANNY. I must?

ANNA. They're beautiful.

DANNY. Uh-ha.

ALICE. Gerald, have you met Mr. Grundy?

DANNY. Yes—I met him in bathing.

ALICE. What?

DANNY. Bathing in the moonlight. As a matter of fact, I tried to sell him a little Whiskoff. You know he'll have to shave some time. (*Goes to sofa R.*)

ALICE. (*Crossing to DANNY*) Don't you ever talk about anything but shaving cream?

ANNA. (*Following ALICE*) Well, he'll talk more than shaving cream with me.

DANNY. You come under the head of social activities.

(*DANNY, ALICE and ANNA ad lib. in undertone.*)

DANNY is evidently telling them a funny story.)

GERALD. (*Going to JOHN*) By the way, are you interested in Grundy's new shaving cream? (*They go L.*)

JOHN. (*Making a wry face*) I was at one time. Why?

GERALD. Why, he just told me he might let me in on it.

JOHN. Oh!

GERALD. Do you think there's any money in it?

JOHN. (*Grimly*) All of mine's in it.

GERALD. Oh! Then if it's good enough for you——

BRIGGS. (*Enters, announcing*) Mr. and Mrs. Norris. (*Withdraws into dining room.*)

GERALD. (*Going R.*) Ah, Mr. Grundy—about your shaving cream—what do you call it?

DANNY. Whiskoff—— (*They talk R.*)

ALICE. (*To JOHN, who joins her C.*) I was hoping they wouldn't come.

JOHN. (*Surprised*) Why, Alice . . .

ALICE. It's awful to have to put up with her meddling in my household affairs.

JOHN. But you know—I owe him that money . . .

ALICE. Oh, I'll have to put up with her, I suppose, till we get out of debt to them.

(*HILDA NORRIS, a somewhat faded woman of forty, enters, followed by her husband, MILTON NORRIS, ten years her junior. HILDA is intellectual, formal, politely self-assertive. MILTON is anemic-looking, negative, dominated by his wife. He wears an absent look.*)

HILDA. (*To ALICE and JOHN, who have crossed to door to meet them*) Hello. How are you, Alice?

ALICE. Oh, pretty well. (*JOHN shakes hands with MILTON.*)

HILDA. Are we the first on deck? (*Crossing R.*)

ALICE. No—here's Anna—Mr. Grundy—Mr. Kenyon—— (*Indicating them. ANNA, DANNY and GERALD rise from couch R. and greet MR. and MRS. NORRIS.*)

HILDA. Hello, everybody. (*Sits chair R.*) Hello,

JOHN. (*To JOHN, who is L.C., talking with MILTON.*)

JOHN. How are you?

HILDA. I feel all in. How do I look?

JOHN. Charming.

HILDA. (*Smirking, sits*) Nice of you to say so, though I had to fish for that. We had to rush so to get here. We didn't get your invitation till so late. Why didn't you invite us sooner?

JOHN. It's one of those impromptu affairs.

HILDA. Oh, I see. I had to drag Milton along by the collar. He hates to leave the house on Saturday night—he'd rather stay home and sleep.

JOHN. (*Glancing uneasily at MILTON*) I'm sorry to keep you up——

MILTON. Oh, I don't mind.

HILDA. (*Moving up c.*) Oh, Gerald!

DANNY. That's you—that's you!

GERALD. (*Rising and coming to her*) Yes, Aunt Hilda.

HILDA. Have you written anything new lately?

GERALD. Why, yes, Aunt Hilda—I have started on a new story——

HILDA. Tell me about it. (*Taking him by the arm and leading him to window, while he gives a worried glance over his shoulder toward ANNA. ALICE watches JOHN and MILTON furtively.*)

GERALD. It's a deep sea tragedy. I was reading one of Joseph Conrad's novels——

DANNY. And he liked it so well he went home and wrote it.

GERALD. It's absolutely original. (*They go up-stage.*)

ANNA. Oh, Danny! (*Protestingly.*)

JOHN. (*Offering cigars to MILTON*) Have a smoke?

MILTON. No, thanks. (*After a look toward HILDA*) My wife doesn't approve of it.

JOHN. Oh, I forgot. (*Replaces humidior*) How's business?

MILTON. Picking up a little.

JOHN. That's good.

MILTON. How are things with you?

JOHN. Rather bad just now.

MILTON. I'm sorry.

JOHN. (*Lowering voice*) By the way, I'd like to have a talk with you about my note—it falls due Monday, if you remember.

MILTON. I know. (*Rises, goes up.*)

JOHN. Suppose we take a walk in the garden?
(*To ALICE*) Excuse us?

ALICE. Certainly.

HILDA. Don't go out without your hat, Milton. Your hair's getting thin.

MILTON. Oh, I—I left it in the hall. (*Starts toward main door.*)

JOHN. Don't bother, Mr. Norris. I'll lend you mine. (*Gets his own hat from chair.*)

MILTON. Thank you. (*JOHN puts hat on MILTON'S head which is several sizes too large; they go out window.*)

HILDA. (*To GERALD*) I think that is perfectly marvelous.

GERALD. I'm glad you like it. (*Goes to ANNA.*)

ANNA. Oh, Gerald, come over here and read us some more of your poem—Danny loves them. (*GERALD goes R. and sits on sofa, reading in subdued voice some verse.*)

HILDA. (*Glancing around*) Alice, what have you done to the room?

ALICE. Spring cleaning. (*Goes to her.*)

HILDA. You've waited till now? I did mine weeks ago. (*Moving to davenport*) New pillows, eh? When did these join?

ALICE. Just the other day.

HILDA. (*Taking up a pillow*) How did you come to choose such colors?

ALICE. (*Embarrassed*) I don't know. Why?

HILDA. They clash awfully. They'd never go together. They just kill each other. (*Puts pillow on floor behind davenport*) There! I've prevented a possible murder, my dear. (*Moving to L. of davenport*) Did you get a new chair?

ALICE. Not exactly.

HILDA. I didn't notice this one the last time I was here.

ALICE. I had it brought down from the attic.

HILDA. My dear child, what did you do that for?

ALICE. I thought we might use it.

HILDA. You can't possibly use it in this room; it's out of harmony with everything. (*Smiling sweetly*) You don't mind my saying so?

ALICE. No, no, not at all.

HILDA. I've made a study, you know, of interior decorating.

ALICE. You have a natural talent for it.

HILDA. (*Examining chair*) Thank you.

(BRIGGS enters from dining room.)

ALICE. Well?

BRIGGS. Mrs. Mason just telephoned; she says she can't get here until ten.

ALICE. Very well. (BRIGGS starts to withdraw.)

HILDA. Oh, Butler.

BRIGGS. (*Coming to her*) Yes, ma'am.

HILDA. (*To BUTLER*) Take this chair away, please.

BRIGGS. Take it away?

HILDA. Mrs. Bowen doesn't want it here.

BRIGGS. Where shall I——?

HILDA. Put it anywhere you like. (ALICE starts)
R. BRIGGS exits hallway with chair.) Oh, Alice.

ALICE. Yes?

HILDA. (*Crossing to portrait on wall*) This picture wasn't here before, was it?

ALICE. No.

HILDA. I thought I hadn't seen it.

ALICE. We brought that down from the attic, too.

HILDA. What a horrible face. Who is he?

ALICE. (*Quietly*) That's my father.

HILDA. Oh, I beg your pardon—— (*After another look at picture*) Come to look at it again, I do see a family resemblance, and speaking of pictures—(*Surveying table R.*)—what's become of my photograph?

ALICE. Your picture?

HILDA. It was on this table the last time I called.

ALICE. (*Somewhat flurried*) It must be here somewhere.

HILDA. (*Going to stand against wall on R.*) Oh, here it is. How did it ever get over here?

ALICE. I don't know, I'm sure.

HILDA. (*Coming and placing photo on table, R.C.*) I hate to be put in a corner; out of sight, out of mind. (*Going to davenport*) Some of your furniture is out of place, too. (*Calling*) Gerald—oh, Gerald!

DANNY. That's you.

GERALD. (*Rising quickly and coming to her*) Yes, Aunt Hilda.

HILDA. (*To ALICE*) You don't mind, do you, dear? (*Then, without waiting for an answer, to GERALD*) Turn that a little more obliquely, will you, please?

GERALD. (*Staring at her*) The davenport?

HILDA. Yes. It will give more space—just a little bit more. (*GERALD moves end table, then pulls davenport up to it*) Thank you so much.

GERALD. You're welcome. (*Rejoins ANNA and DANNY.*)

HILDA. (*To ALICE*) You see, my dear? That gives you more space to move around here. (*Indicating c. of room*) Utility first, decoration next. This table should be moved a little, too. (*Indicating oblong table. Calling*) Gerald!

GERALD. (*Rising and coming as before*) Yes, Aunt Hilda?

HILDA. (*To ALICE*) May I? (*ALICE nods wearily. To GERALD*) Move this over, please.

GERALD. The table?

HILDA. Yes. It's too far below the couch. (*GERALD moves table.*) Careful of my photograph! Awfully sweet of you.

GERALD. It's a pleasure. (*Returns to ANNA and DANNY.*)

DANNY. (*Rising*) Will you get around to us to-day?

HILDA. No. Stay where you are.

DANNY. I'm glad we are below the dead line.

HILDA. (*Surveying room*) Now! That's what I call an improvement. (*Moving to dining room*) Have you changed the dining room any?

ALICE. Not much.

HILDA. I'll go and look it over for you. I don't mind doing it for you at all. (*Exit to dining room. ALICE sinks in chair.*)

ANNA. Gerald, please finish your poem.

GERALD. (*Reading poem*) And the magical clews—
Threading all ether and thrilled— With the puls-
ings of news—news! News! News!

HILDA. (*Putting head in at door*) Gerald!

DANNY. That's you.

GERALD. (*Rising*) Yes?

(*READY Crash.*)

HILDA. Come and help me in here, please. (*Closes door.*)

GERALD. (*Gloomily*) Excuse me, Anna. (*Goes and enters dining room.*)

DANNY. (*Going to ALICE*) Have you sold the house, Alice?

ALICE. I don't blame you for thinking so.

DANNY. You're a great girl, Alice, letting her come in here and upset all the works. Any other woman would have hit the ceiling. (*There is a crash of glass in dining room. ALICE rises and walks about nervously. ANNA screams and runs to dining-room door.*) You can imagine what she's doing to that dining room. She must have found an axe.

ALICE. What do you suppose she's done? I won't have her breaking—— (*ALICE starts toward dining room, with a determined look.*)

DANNY. Don't go in, Alice, you'll only upset yourself. I'll try to talk to her or punch her on the nose. (*DANNY exits to dining room. ALICE goes to dining-room door. JOHN and MILTON enter. ANNA and ALICE cross to dining-room door, looking off. JOHN and MILTON start L.*)

JOHN. Come on up. I want you to see my den.

MILTON. (*To ALICE*) Pardon me.

ALICE. Mr. Norris, I want to talk to you about your——

JOHN. (*Motions to ALICE to stop talking. To MILTON*) About your note—— I'll do that, dear. I hope you can see your way clear to give me an extension.

MILTON. Well, John, we've known all along that things have been breaking badly for you. My wife and I were talking about it today, and my wife decided to give you another six months.

JOHN. (*Seizing MILTON's hand*) Thanks, Mr. Norris. You don't know how grateful I am.

MILTON. It's all right. (*They exit upstairs.*)

ANNA. (*To ALICE*) I don't see how you can tolerate that dreadful woman.

ALICE. Well, believe me, if John were not in debt to them, I'd show her the door mighty quick. (*Angry.*)

BRIGGS. (*Announcing*) Mr. and Mrs. Baxter!

(FLOSSIE BAXTER, a handsome young blonde, enters with PHIL, her husband, a man of thirty, cheerful, man-about-town manner.)

ALICE. (*Pleased*) Oh! (*They enter*) Flossie!

FLOSSIE. Hello, Alice. (ALICE crosses to PHIL) Hello, Anna. (*Giving her hand.*)

ALICE. Glad you've come, Phil. (*Giving hand.*)

PHIL. Thanks. How do, Anna?

ANNA. Hello, Phil! (*Waves hand to him.*)

PHIL. (*To BUTLER*) You're sure my little old Wiffet four will be all right out there?

BRIGGS. I think so, sir.

FLOSSIE. Phil's awfully fond of his new car.

PHIL. It's a great little buzz wagon.

ALICE. (*To FLOSSIE*) Did you have a pleasant trip?

FLOSSIE. Lovely.

PHIL. I'll say so—drove the Wiffet all the way to Saranac and back.

ALICE. Saranac is delightful, isn't it?

FLOSSIE. Yes. Phil was just crazy about it.

ALICE. John and I went there on }
our honeymoon. } (*Together*)
ANNA. Alice and John spent their }
honeymoon there. }

FLOSSIE. Really?

ALICE. You won't mind if I leave you—I have a few things to attend to.

FLOSSIE. Go right along. Don't mind us. (ALICE exits into garden.)

ANNA. Let's all sit down.

FLOSSIE. (*Going to davenport with ANNA, to sit*)
Are we the first to show up?

ANNA. Oh, no. The Norrises are here, and Mr. Kenyon, and Mr. Grundy.

FLOSSIE. (*Pleased*) Danny Grundy?

ANNA. Yes.

PHIL. (*Knitting brows*) When did he get back?
(*Sits with ANNA and ALICE.*)

ANNA. Today. He's been away six months.

FLOSSIE. (*To PHIL*) Danny hasn't any idea that we're married.

PHIL. No, or he would at least have sent us a telegram or something.

FLOSSIE. Let's not tell him yet—let him find it out himself.

ANNA. Won't he be surprised.

FLOSSIE. I haven't seen Danny in a year. How is he?

ANNA. He's fine. He's been awfully busy, though.

FLOSSIE. What doing?

ANNA. Selling "Whiskoff."

FLOSSIE. Whiskoff.

PHIL. What's that?

FLOSSIE. What in the world is that?

ANNA. Shaving cream.

PHIL. Ah—h——

FLOSSIE. Has he quit the old company?

ANNA. Oh, no, this is the same company—same old cream, too. He's changed the name—that's all.

PHIL. You don't mean to say he's sold any?

ANNA. Things look wonderful, he says. They'll have to enlarge the factory pretty soon.

PHIL. (*Ironically*) They'll have to get it started first, won't they?

ANNA. Oh, that'll be easy, now the name is changed. That German name it had didn't mean

anything. Danny's name has a kick in it. Are you interested in money-making Phil?

PHIL. In money-making, yes. (*Rises.*)

ANNA. I don't know of course, but I think Danny would be glad to let you in on it.

PHIL. (*Gloomily*) He has already, thank you.

ANNA. Isn't that fine! (*To FLOSSIE*) Think of your husband being one of the cream kings.

FLOSSIE. (*Dubiously*) Lovely.

PHIL. (*Feebly*) Ha, ha, ha!

ANNA. That's just like Danny, though. He's too good-hearted to keep a fortune to himself.

PHIL. Or anything else, I guess.

ANNA. He's let all his friends in on it.

DANNY. (*Enters from dining room*) Gerald's got the sideboard on his chest. (*Sees FLOSSIE*) Flossie!

FLOSSIE. (*Crossing to him*) Danny, how are you?

DANNY. I didn't expect to see you here.

FLOSSIE. Surprised, eh?

DANNY. Yes, delighted! I haven't seen you since that night at Palisades Park. (*FLOSSIE motions him to stop talking*) And Phil Baxter! (*Going to him.*)

PHIL. (*Awkwardly*) How are you?

DANNY. (*Seizing his hand*) Seems like old times to see you again. I've got a new proposition to make to you.

PHIL. If it's about that rotten cream, you can tell me about it later. Come on, Flossie. (*Starts for garden.*)

FLOSSIE. No, I want to have a little talk with Danny.

ANNA. I'll go with you, Phil. I want to hear about the trip you took.

(*ANNA and PHIL exit to garden.*)

DANNY. (*Following up*) It isn't rotten cream—

it's good cream—— (*Calls after them*) Tell you all about it later. (*Turns to FLOSSIE.*)

FLOSSIE. (*On davenport*) Anna's an awfully sweet girl, isn't she?

DANNY. (*Sits beside her*) I came all the way from Atlanta to see her——

FLOSSIE. Why, Danny! Are you really in love?

DANNY. I was love-sick and train-sick all the way.

FLOSSIE. Ha, ha, ha!

DANNY. Tell me about yourself, Flossie. I haven't heard a word about you since I've been away.

FLOSSIE. Oh, I've been fine.

DANNY. Think of my meeting you and Phil Baxter under the same roof! That's just the way it ought to be. There's a fellow would make you a good husband. (*FLOSSIE laughs.*) I mean it. Now that he's straightened out.

FLOSSIE. (*Surprised*) Straightened out?

DANNY. He's sure changed since I saw him last.

FLOSSIE. Changed—in what way?

DANNY. He isn't a bit like he was in the old days.

FLOSSIE. How do you mean?

DANNY. How long have you known him?

FLOSSIE. About six months.

DANNY. You should have seen him a year ago. He's toned down now, though. I can see that. I hardly knew him at first.

FLOSSIE. (*Hiding her embarrassment*) What do you know about him, Danny?

DANNY. He's the best fellow in the world, Flossie—except when he's drinking.

FLOSSIE. Drinking?

DANNY. Ha, ha! (*Shakes head reflectively.*)

FLOSSIE. He used to drink, you say?

DANNY. (*Putting a hand to his forehead*) Oh,

my lady—and how—— There's a fellow used to spend all his time in cabarets.

FLOSSIE. Cabarets?

DANNY. That's how he came to get mixed up with that cabaret girl.

FLOSSIE. Cabaret girl?

DANNY. I don't know who she was. Charlie Twitchell told me about it. Guess she was a live one. Talk about a scandal. You must have seen it in the Graphic.

FLOSSIE. No.

DANNY. Phil got this cabaret girl to do a muscle dance.

FLOSSIE. (*Under her breath*) What?

DANNY. (*Pantomimes*) Tossing the torso—muscle dance. That's what started the row.

FLOSSIE. Row?

DANNY. Phil hauled off and punched the head waiter.

FLOSSIE. Punched him?

DANNY. Right in the dining room. There's a fighter for you. Oh, boy! How he can go! They had to call the police finally.

FLOSSIE. Police?

DANNY. Poor old Phil—it took three policemen to pull him out from under the waiter.

FLOSSIE. He was arrested.

DANNY. Oh, the Judge was lenient with him. He wasn't in prison long.

FLOSSIE. Prison!

DANNY. Yes, but the mystery of it all was—as Charlie Twitchell was telling me, no one knew what became of the baby.

FLOSSIE. (*Whispers*) The baby—— (*Rises*) Excuse me—I—oh! (*Goes out into garden.*)

DANNY. What's the matter with her?

HILDA. (*Enters from dining room*) Oh, dear! I hope Alice will forgive Gerald for breaking the

china cabinet. Some people are fussy about these things. My! What a time we had. I've threatened so often to do it—and now it's done. Alice is such a dear girl, but such a terrible housekeeper.

DANNY. I hear they use paper dishes.

HILDA. First we took that stuffed partridge that hung over the sideboard and put it in the cellar. Then we took down that petrified fish—do you know the fish?

DANNY. Intimately.

HILDA. With those things around, the place looked like a museum. (*To GERALD, who enters, dishevelled and exhausted*) Gerald! (*GERALD goes R. To DANNY*) Poor boy—he's so conscientious. He moved everything around so carefully. When the china cabinet broke he almost fainted. (*GERALD sits on sofa R.*)

DANNY. We all did.

HILDA. I wonder if she's made any changes upstairs. (*Goes to stairs.*)

DANNY. I don't know.

HILDA. Gerald!

DANNY. (*Calls*) Gerald!

GERALD. (*Rises*) Yes, Aunt Hilda.

HILDA. Oh, here you are. Come, Gerald. We may as well make a good job of it. (*Goes upstairs, followed by GERALD.*)

DANNY. (*To GERALD*) Better get your overalls out of the cellar, Gerald.

PHIL. (*Entering from garden*) I'll be right back. I just want to look at my little old Whiffet four.

DANNY. Think I've got her under my coat? (*PHIL starts out.*) Wait a minute, Phil—about this shaving cream——

PHIL. I'd rather not talk about that, if you don't mind.

DANNY. Well, don't blame me if this thing turns out to be a winner and you haven't a big slice of it.

I'm going to try to get John to raise his ante. I wouldn't do that if I didn't have faith in it. He's the best friend I have. Now that you and Flossie are wiffeting around together, it would be kind of a nest egg for you.

PHIL. By the way, you and Flossie used to be great friends—weren't you?

DANNY. We did—we were. She used to be a swell-looking girl, Phil. (*Sits chair R.*)

PHIL. (*Looking at him*) Not bad looking now, I'll say.

DANNY. She looks fine—considering what she's been through . . .

PHIL. (*Staring at him*) Been through——?

DANNY. Flossie deserves a lot of credit. 'Tain't every girl could pull up the way she has.

PHIL. Pull up? (*Comes C.*)

DANNY. Once a girl has been an artists' model, it's hard to get her to settle down.

PHIL. Artists' model?

DANNY. That's the life that gave her the wrong start, Phil.

PHIL. (*After a gulp*) How do you mean?

DANNY. Studios in the daytime, Bohemia at night—you know.

PHIL. How long have you known her? (*Sits on stool.*)

DANNY. Let me see—Ella was born—since she was that high.

PHIL. She was a model for dresses, wasn't she?

DANNY. Yes. She posed for hot weather pictures, too.

PHIL. When was all this?

DANNY. In the hot weather.

PHIL. That was before I met her.

DANNY. Several summers. She's changed wonderfully. She's not a bit like the girl that eloped when she was sixteen.

PHIL. Eloped?

DANNY. She couldn't have been a day older when she married that artist.

PHIL. What artist?

DANNY. Fellow named—it's on the tip of my tongue—— Charlie Twitchell was telling me—— Hanged if I can think of it now.

PHIL. She was sixteen then, you say?

DANNY. That's what her parents claimed. She kicked like a steer when her folks had the marriage annulled.

PHIL. It was annulled, was it?

DANNY. She was under age, you know.

PHIL. I see. (*Hitches at his collar.*)

DANNY. She had her own way, though, finally. The very day she was eighteen she marched her husband right into the house.

PHIL. She married him again?

DANNY. No, no, not the artist—her second husband. He died or else——

PHIL. Oh!

DANNY. It's a wonder to me she hasn't another husband by this time. Just the same, she knows what it's all about, and she'd make some fellow a darned good wife.

PHIL. (*With a strange smile*) Thanks for the tip. (*Crosses to c.*)

DANNY. Don't let on to Flossie what I told you.

PHIL. Oh, no.

DANNY. There's lots of little things I could——

GERALD. (*Entering with manuscript*) Oh, Mr. Grundy. Would you like to hear the last of my poem?

DANNY. Yes, I certainly would.

GERALD. (*Reads*)

Life and its glories were dearly bought—
Death and the angels were all he sought—

(FLOSSIE enters. DANNY brings her down and he exits. GERALD turns and finds FLOSSIE standing beside him.)

FLOSSIE. Excuse me—may I speak to my husband alone?

GERALD. Certainly—— (Exits into garden.)

FLOSSIE. (Comes down to PHIL, who does not look at her) Well, what's the matter with you?

PHIL. Well, what's the matter with you?

FLOSSIE. You've been talking to Danny Grundy?

PHIL. Yes.

FLOSSIE. What about?

PHIL. About you. And I don't like some of the things he said.

FLOSSIE. Well, I don't like some of the things he said about you.

PHIL. What did he say?

FLOSSIE. He told me all about that muscle dancer—and what about the baby?

PHIL. What baby?

FLOSSIE. Why, the——

JOHN. (Enters from stairs) Hello, Flossie. (Comes and shakes hands.) Glad to see you. Lots of happiness to the bride and groom. Say, Phil, let's drink a toast to the bride. (Taking each by an arm) Come on. (Leads them to dining-room door.)

(ALICE enters quickly. FLOSSIE exits in dining room with nose in air.)

ALICE. (Highly agitated) Oh, John!

PHIL. This fellow Grundy——

JOHN. (To PHIL and FLOSSIE, after a glance toward ALICE) Go right in. I'll be with you in a minute. (PHIL exits.) What's wrong, Alice?

ALICE. What are we going to do with that woman?

JOHN. You ought to be used to her by this time.

ALICE. That's just it. Danny Grundy says I've been letting her have her own way too long. I'm going to put a stop to it now! (*Picks up HILDA's photo, takes it up to small table and puts it face down.*)

JOHN. Don't upset yourself, Alice.

ALICE. She's made a fool of me long enough—calling everyone's attention to the way I run the house. (*Starts moving the davenport back in place.*)

JOHN. You only imagine it, dear. I don't think anyone has noticed it.

ALICE. Danny Grundy noticed it the first thing.

JOHN. Oh, don't pay any attention to him.

ALICE. Why not? Danny says she may know something, but she doesn't know good manners. (*Picks up pillow from floor and puts it back on davenport.*)

JOHN. Now listen to me——

ALICE. She wouldn't dare take such liberties if we didn't owe them money. . . .

JOHN. But we do owe them money. We can't afford to quarrel with them now—I've just fixed up matters with Mr. Norris——

ALICE. (*Drying her eyes*) I'd rather starve than have to cater to her.

JOHN. I can't understand this change that's come over you. You and Mrs. Norris have always gotten along fine together. Now—all of a sudden——

ALICE. No, not of a sudden. It's been here—— (*Striking her breast*) Here for months, but I tried to crush it for your sake. But I can't go on any longer—it's beginning to wear me out.

JOHN. Why, Alice, I—I'd no idea you felt this way about it.

ALICE. Danny was just saying he can't understand how I've put up with her so long. Any other

woman would have shown her the way out—
Why, Danny Grundy says that—

JOHN. Good heavens! Will you stop listening to Danny Grundy?

ALICE. Well, I'm not going to listen to her any longer. (*Moves to dining-room door.*)

JOHN. (*Following her a few steps*) Don't get excited, now . . .

ALICE. Either she leaves this house tonight or I do!

JOHN. Why, Alice.

ALICE. You'll see. (*About to exit to dining room. ANNA enters from garden.*)

JOHN. Where is she?

ALICE. She's upstairs. (*Exits dining room, as JOHN starts for stairs.*)

(*WARNING.*)

ANNA. What's the matter with Alice?

JOHN. Danny Grundy's been up to his old tricks again. (*Draws back the davenport as HILDA placed it.*)

ANNA. What do you mean?

JOHN. You know him as well as I do. (*Starts L. again.*)

ANNA. What's he been saying?

JOHN. I don't know—he's got Alice stirred up. I know that. (*Comes back.*)

ANNA. What about?

JOHN. About Mrs. Norris running the house. Alice has threatened to leave on account of it.

ANNA. (*Shocked*) Oh! I don't blame her. (*Walking about.*)

JOHN. I knew he'd start something before the night was over.

ANNA. But Mrs. Norris . . .

JOHN. I've let him get away with it before for your sake. It's got to a point now, though, where I'm going to tell him to mind his own business.

Why, he hadn't been in the house tonight five minutes when he started to roast the Norrises. He deals out scandal like you'd talk about the weather. I'm just fed up with it.

ANNA. (*Sits*) Danny promised me tonight he'd never cause trouble again.

JOHN. The only way to make *him* stop talking is to clip his tongue off.

ANNA. (*After slight pause*) I wish it hadn't happened tonight—just when I was so happy.

JOHN. (*Going and putting an arm round her*) There, there, dear, I'm sorry I told you this—I wouldn't spoil your happiness for the world. Don't cry . . . please—please.

ANNA. (*Drying her eyes*) I'll never marry him, John—— (*JOHN gives her a quick look.*) I mean it—I'll tell him so tonight.

JOHN. Well—I don't blame you, but—wait till the guests have gone. (*HILDA enters from stairway.*) I hope I can get him out of the house before he gets after Mrs. Norris.

HILDA. You're talking about me?

DANNY. (*Enters from garden*) Hello, Mrs. Norris. I've been looking for you.

HILDA. Really?

DANNY. I wanted to tell you something your friend, Mrs. Busby, said about you.

JOHN. Wait a minute.

HILDA. What?

DANNY. It's all right. She's a friend of yours.

HILDA. She's no friend of mine.

DANNY. She told me that. Do you know how old she is?

HILDA. She must be fifty.

DANNY. And ten years off for good behavior. You know, that's not her own face she's wearing.

HILDA. Isn't it?

DANNY. No, she's had it lifted so often—she's talking through her chest. (HILDA *and* JOHN *and* DANNY *laugh.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

The lanterns in the garden are now lighted. Phonograph is playing and the party is going on.

DISCOVERED: MILTON on davenport. JOHN and HILDA dance on from garden. HILDA steps on JOHN'S foot.

HILDA. I beg your pardon.

JOHN. It was all my fault. I'm awfully sorry. I enjoyed that dance very much, Mrs. Norris. Thank you. (HILDA exits. To MILTON) Mr. Norris, are you having a good time?

MILTON. Well—yes and no.

JOHN. I thought you were having a little nap.

MILTON. Someone has been building or tearing down something up there.

JOHN. Your wife has been rearranging the furniture, or something.

MILTON. That's her hobby, John. She's done the same thing at home. She's moved me around to every room in our house. The garage will be the next place. Do you know, I haven't had a good night's sleep in six months?

JOHN. You'd make a good night watchman. (They laugh.) Why don't you go up to my den and try to steal a little sleep right now?

MILTON. I believe I will. Thanks very much. You don't suppose that fellow Grundy'll follow me up there, do you?

(DANNY enters; stands back, listening.)

JOHN. Grundy?

MILTON. Yes, I've been trying to avoid him all evening.

JOHN. What for?

MILTON. He has the most persistent way with him, and last time I saw him he induced me to invest in that shaving cream business.

JOHN. You don't mean to say you're in it, too?

MILTON. I am, for fifteen thousand dollars.

JOHN. Great Scott!

(DANNY exits, tiptoeing out.)

MILTON. I've seen my attorney and there may be a chance to get my money returned. You see, I've never mentioned it to my wife.

JOHN. Do you have to tell her about all your investments?

MILTON. Oh, all of them. I wouldn't do a thing without her. You won't mention this, will you?

JOHN. Of course not.

MILTON. I don't mind telling you, my dear friend, if my wife ever hears about my investing any such a sum in such a silly thing—— I'd rather not think of it——

JOHN. I appreciate your position.

(STOP Phonograph.)

DANNY. (Enters, speaking as he is backing on) No, no. I'm sorry, but we never return any money. (Comes down) Am I interrupting you, boys?

JOHN. No.

DANNY. Talking business?

JOHN. No.

DANNY. Telling a story?

JOHN. No.

DANNY. The party is kinda sagging, ain't it? (He sits on couch with the two men. Pause.) Did I ever tell you about Charlie Twitchell's father?

Well, Charles's father was superintendent of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum at Mt. Carmel, Ohio. Charlie never knew any one but just deaf and dumb folks, and his father—he knew his father. His father was not deaf, but he was awful dumb, and I guess Charlie was sixteen before he ever saw anything but a gesture. Well, when Charlie got to be in his “knickateens,” he said, “Paw, I’d like to go to the big city.” So his Paw hitched up the spring wagon and took Charlie over to Sandusky. And as they were driving along they passed a little girl. She was carrying a basket of quinces—and as they were driving past the little girl said, “Do you want to buy any quinces?” She had an impediment in her speech. Well, Charlie just loved quince jelly, and he said, “Paw, I want to buy some of them quinces.” And his Paw said, “You can’t no such a gosh-darned thing.” Then Charlie expostulated right in front of his father, so his Paw gave him ten cents and Charlie got down off the wagon and bought himself seven cents’ worth of quinces—and when he got back up in the wagon his Paw said, “Give me back them three coppers.” And Charlie said, “No, we never return any money.” (JOHN and MILTON exchange glances. *After a pause*) Yes, I can see the party is dead. Where is—now—Phil Baxter?

JOHN. He’s in the dining room with his wife.

DANNY. Who’s wife?

JOHN. His wife.

DANNY. Is he married?

JOHN. Certainly.

DANNY. Who to?

JOHN. To Flossie.

DANNY. They’re married.

JOHN. For a week.

DANNY. Came the dawn! (*Opens dining-room door.*)



PHIL. (*Off stage*) At least I'm entitled to an explanation.

FLOSSIE. What do you think I'm entitled to?

DANNY. (*Closing door*) Yes, yes—they're married.

JOHN. That's something you did not know. (*Exits into garden.*)

MILTON. (*Rises*) Mr. Grundy, I'm going to have legal procedure taken to investigate you and your company.

DANNY. Investigate it all you like, Mr. Norris.

MILTON. That's what I'm going to do—I'm going to get my money back.

DANNY. If you're smart, you'll buy some more of it.

MILTON. I've got too many shares in that damned thing already.

DANNY. Take my advice and don't sell them. You're going to be sorry if you sell that stock.

MILTON. Sell it? I can't even give it away. (*Exit MILTON up stairs.*)

(ANNA enters; goes to table; gets manuscript of poem; starts out.)

DANNY. Now, wait a minute—— Are you going to keep this up all night?

ANNA. Really, Danny, I don't think I ought to speak to you.

DANNY. Don't be so fussy—everybody speaks to me.

ANNA. The trouble is you speak to anybody.

DANNY. Because I want to be friendly.

ANNA. Why can't you be like Gerald?

DANNY. I'm bad enough now!

ANNA. Gerald is a nice boy.

DANNY. Nice boy!

(*READY Phonograph.*)

ANNA. You just say that because he writes poetry.

DANNY. Oh!

ANNA. Well, anyhow, he doesn't tell everything he knows.

DANNY. Maybe he doesn't know anything——

ANNA. Is that so! Well, here's one of his poems that you might well profit by. (*Reading*)

“Speech may be silver,
But Silence is gold;
This is still true
Though the saying is old,
Remember this adage
In spirit and letter—
Silver is good,
But gold is far better.”

DANNY. And if you love me, please answer my letter. Now, how'd you like to quit reading those limericks and have a dance with a regular guy? (*Takes manuscript from her and they go toward window*) Come on.

(*PHONOGRAPH 2.*)

JOHN. (*Enter, stopping DANNY*) Just a minute—— I'd like to talk to you—— (*To ANNA*) Alone, if you don't mind.

ANNA. Certainly, John. (*Exits garden.*)

JOHN. There's an atmosphere of trouble brewing around here that I don't like.

DANNY. Trouble?

JOHN. Yes. People are beginning to repeat things that they say *you* say somebody said.

DANNY. Oh—about the shaving cream. Well, don't let them kid you about that. I know you've got a lot of it and I want you to take some more. I may hear something tonight. That stock's going up, and we'll make a lot of money.

JOHN. I'm talking about things you've said to people——

DANNY. I told them it was a good thing. I told every one of them to get in. I'm expecting good news any minute from the Consolidated. Why, I've just been trying to make big-hearted Norris put up a little more money. The more cash we get, the more we can exploit it under my new name, "Whisk-off"! Ain't it a bird?

JOHN. I'm trying to tell you that some things you've said here tonight are beginning to spoil the fun at my wife's party. You're going to be in the family now, Danny, and I think I ought to have a plain talk with you.

DANNY. Oh, I know what you mean. You think because I've been a rolling stone that I can't settle down, but don't you worry. I love Anna and I'm going to make her a good husband.

JOHN. But really, Danny, if you don't quit——

DANNY. I'll quit everything—anything. You've been a good friend to me, John, and I haven't forgotten it. That's why I let you in first when I got the agency—— (JOHN, *disgusted, goes R.*) I know the stock isn't worth much yet, but it will be.

JOHN. Danny, if persistence means anything, you're going to be a great success.

DANNY. I know it.

(*Enter MILTON.*)

JOHN. (*Hurrying over to him*) Oh, Mr. Norris, didn't you get a nap?

MILTON. It can't be done. (*HILDA entering.*)

HILDA. Oh, there he is—you poor, dear thing.

JOHN. He's been trying to get a little nap, Mrs. Norris.

HILDA. Nap! Dear me! I was afraid of this—I can never keep him awake on Saturday nights. Milton, have you been sleeping?

MILTON. I should say not.

HILDA. He's worse than a baby, Mr. Bowen.

DANNY. Now he's awake, Mrs. Norris, I wish you'd help me to persuade him to hold on to that Whiskoff.

HILDA. You wish I'd what?

DANNY. Help me persuade him to buy some more shares.

HILDA. Some *more* shares!

DANNY. I'll explain it to you. Women have more sense than men.

HILDA. (*Giving MILTON a hard look*) More sense than some of them——

DANNY. That's what I meant. As I was just telling Mr. Norris, there's a chance for him to make a lot of money in this Whiskoff. You see, it's——

HILDA. Just a minute. Did I understand you to say that you've already sold my husband some shares in—(*Hesitates*)—whatever you call it?

DANNY. Why, didn't he tell you?

HILDA. Not a word.

DANNY. About six months ago, wasn't it, Mr. Norris?

MILTON. I don't remember.

HILDA. You don't remember!

DANNY. It was just before I left for the South.

JOHN. (*Trying to change the subject*) Oh, Mrs. Norris——

HILDA. Just a moment, Mr. Grundy. How many of those shares did you say Mr. Norris bought?

DANNY. Fifteen thousand dollars' worth, wasn't it, Mr. Norris?

MILTON. I don't remember.

DANNY. Yes, that's all it was and he ought to have more. Of course, it's a gamble. So is everything in life, but this Whiskoff's a good thing.

HILDA. Whiskoff—it sounds queer to me.

DANNY. That's because you have an evil mind——

HILDA. What do you mean?



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Milton: "No, it won't be long now."

DANNY. Not what you mean. Let me explain it to you. Women have more gumption than men. We need just a little more money for exploitation, and when we get it it won't be long before we're shaving the whole world. Why, this stuff is guaranteed to soften the beard on a billy goat.

(*READY Phonograph.*)

HILDA. Why does anybody want to soften a goat's beard?

(*RECORD No. 3.*)

DANNY. I don't know—the first time I see one, I'll ask him. It must have its advantages——

HILDA. (*Rising, with a peculiar smile*) Oh, Milton, I'd like to talk to you outside—alone.

DANNY. Wait a moment, Mrs. Norris. I know you don't like me now, but you will before the night's over.

HILDA. Milton.

MILTON. Yes, dear.

DANNY. (*Calling*) Oh, Mrs. Norris! Oh, I forgot to tell you that with the new evening gowns they're wearing, it's going to have a big sale with women, too.

HILDA. Milton, come with me, dear. We won't be long. (*Exits with DANNY.*)

MILTON. (*Turning hopelessly to the others*) No, it won't be long now.

(*PHONOGRAPH 3.*)

BRIGGS. (*Enters, announcing*) Mr. and Mrs. Mason.

JOHN. (*Calling into garden*) Oh, Alice!—Mr. and Mrs. Mason—— (*ALICE enters from garden. MAZIE enters, followed by CHIEF. Shaking hands with MAZIE*) How do you do, Mrs. Mason—— (*MAZIE goes to ALICE.*)

ALICE. Hello, Mazie dear! (*Shakes hands.*)

MAZIE. So sorry to be late.

ALICE. Oh, don't mention it.

MAZIE. That's the penalty of being married to the Chief of Police.

ALICE. I wouldn't say "penalty"—I'd say *advantage*—— (*They laugh. ALICE and MAZIE exit to garden. ALICE shakes head with "How do you do, Chief?" ad lib.*)

JOHN. So you got here at last.

CHIEF. Sorry we're late. I've got a new clue on the Baldwin murder case.

JOHN. Any results?

CHIEF. Naw.

JOHN. Funny thing about that case.

CHIEF. Glad you think so. The department hasn't had a laugh out of it yet.

JOHN. I mean it's funny you can't get a line on the murderers.

CHIEF. I'm convinced that the woman was cheating her husband, and if I can find out who her lover was I'll nail the man that killed her.

JOHN. Well, I wish you luck, Chief.

CHIEF. Thanks—John—— (*Gets cigar*) Had a mighty busy day. (*Strokes chin and eyes JOHN significantly*) I wonder if—a little—— (*Pantomiming taking a drink.*)

JOHN. Sure! We're going to have some at supper.

CHIEF. Too many around then.

JOHN. Oh, I see.

CHIEF. That's the worst of being an officer of the law—you can't take anything in company.

JOHN. I'll see if I can sneak something. (*Starts toward dining room, then stops suddenly*) Wait a minute—I'm forgetting. (*Looks toward closet, then starts toward it*) A friend o' mine made me a present the other day—twenty years old—it cured a cold I had in less than a minute. It's too good to leave around, so I tucked it away in that closet. See if the coast is clear.

CHIEF. All right. (JOHN *enters closet and pours a drink, handing it to CHIEF.*)

JOHN. Here you are.

CHIEF. Here's how.

JOHN. Happy days. (CHIEF *gulps it down.*)

CHIEF. Ah! That hits the spot.

JOHN. Some medicine, eh?

CHIEF. I'll say so.

JOHN. Any time you're dry, you know where it is.

CHIEF. (*Sitting on davenport*) Thank you, John—ah! This is mighty restful after a hard day——

JOHN. How do you like married life, Chief, as far as you've gone?

CHIEF. It has its advantages—I guess I'm a little old-fashioned, but I'm just crazy about my wife.

JOHN. That's fine. You won't mind my giving you a little advice, will you?

CHIEF. You can give me anything you want to, John.

JOHN. Well, speaking as one married man to another, everything will be great if you keep your family and your wife's family out of it.

CHIEF. I've got my family tamed and I've never met any of my wife's family.

JOHN. Never met them?

CHIEF. No, I met Mazie in Poughkeepsie. I went up there to run down a clue on the Baldwin case—the clew blew up, but I got myself a wife. (*They both laugh.*) She was singing at a concert and I'm just crazy about music. Who all is here?

JOHN. There's the Norrises and——

CHIEF. I met them.

JOHN. The Baxters?

CHIEF. Yes.

JOHN. And Mr. Kenyon.

CHIEF. Kenyon?

JOHN. One o' my clerks.

CHIEF. Oh, yes, yes.

JOHN. That's all. (*Slight pause*) Oh, I'm forgetting Mr. Grundy.

(*READY Phonograph No. 4.*)

CHIEF. Grundy?

JOHN. Danny Grundy.

CHIEF. (*Knitting brows*) Is he here?

JOHN. Do you know him?

CHIEF. Slightly.

JOHN. He's the promoter of this shaving cream—

CHIEF. Promoter! You mean undertaker.

JOHN. Oh, then you've heard about it?

CHIEF. Heard about it! I put five thousand dollars in it.

JOHN. You did!

CHIEF. That's the one thing I've got against the Government, John—it guarantees life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to a man like Grundy.

JOHN. I'm surprised you never mentioned this before.

CHIEF. Getting stung is nothing to blow about.

JOHN. Well, you're not alone in it, anyway—there are four of us fish in the house right now.

(*PHONOGRAPH No. 4.*)

CHIEF. I'm sorry I've run into him again, that's all.

MAZIE. (*Entering*) Oh, Ed, darling, aren't you coming out?

CHIEF. (*Rising*) Be right with you, honey.

(*FLOSSIE enters from dining room, crying.*)

JOHN. (*Crossing to her*) Oh, Flossie, forgive me for not joining you—I haven't forgotten. I've been delayed, that's all. Come—we'll have that toast right now.

FLOSSIE. (*Crying*) Don't bother now—please.

JOHN. I'm awfully sorry. We'll have two bumpers later on, to make up for it. Oh—er—Mrs. Baxter, this is Mr. and Mrs. Mason.

FLOSSIE. (*Crying*) How do you do?

JOHN. Mr. Mason is the Chief of Police. (FLOSSIE *crying harder*.)

CHIEF. Delighted.

MAZIE. What's the matter, dear?

FLOSSIE. (*Sobbing*) Nothing.

MAZIE. Did you say your name is Baxter?

FLOSSIE. (*Crying*) Mrs. Philip Baxter.

MAZIE. I've heard that name before.

FLOSSIE. (*Crying*) You must have seen it on the billboards—"Philip Baxter—Real Estate."

MAZIE. Possibly. Where is your husband?

FLOSSIE. (*Crying*) In there. (*Indicating dining-room*.)

MAZIE. I'd love to meet him.

FLOSSIE. I'm afraid I can't arrange it just now. We just had a quarrel.

MAZIE. Oh!

FLOSSIE. (*Crying*) We're not speaking.

MAZIE. I'm sorry.

FLOSSIE. (*Crying. Moving toward garden*) Have you seen the decorations out here?

MAZIE. Yes. They're beautiful, aren't they? (*They exit to garden*.)

JOHN. Ah, that's too bad—I'm awful sorry. (*As MAZIE and FLOSSIE exit, JOHN goes to dining-room door and calls*) Phil, are you in there all alone?

PHIL. (*Offstage*) Yes, I am.

JOHN. Well, come out here. (*Enter PHIL grouchy*.) Why, you're not having any fun.

PHIL. Not a hell of a lot.

JOHN. (*Attempting to be flippant*) Happy young bridegroom, Chief. Just returned from his honeymoon. He and Flossie have been motoring all over the country.

PHIL. Yes, and that Wiffet is a great little car, too. On the way from Saranac we passed a Rolls Royce.

JOHN. What were they doing—changing a tire?
Chief Mason—Phil Baxter——

CHIEF. Glad to meet the happy groom.

PHIL. Not so happy.

JOHN. And I haven't forgotten that toast we were going to have to you and the bride.

PHIL. I ain't speaking to the bride.

JOHN. Why not?

CHIEF. I don't like to see young couples quarreling.

PHIL. That fellow Grundy's been saying things.

JOHN. (*Laughing nervously*) Ha, ha, ha!
Don't take him seriously—it's all in good fun.

PHIL. I don't see the fun of it.

JOHN. Well, we'll have the drink anyway.

PHIL. I'll take a drink with you—be glad to get it.

JOHN. (*Going to closet*) I've got something special right here. Chief just had one. (*Goes to closet L.*)

CHIEF. Yes, and I can recommend it. Live in this section, Mr. Baxter?

PHIL. Not exactly. I'm over on the shore.

CHIEF. Oh!

BRIGGS. (*Enters*) Beg pardon, Mr. Baxter, but there's a traffic officer at the door wants to see you.

PHIL. What about?

BRIGGS. It seems the lights have gone out on your car.

PHIL. How could that happen?

BRIGGS. A man hit it.

PHIL. A man hit my car—— What with?

BRIGGS. With another car, sir.

PHIL. Good heavens!

BRIGGS. The officer says it's your fault. Your lights were out and he wants to see you right away.

PHIL. Good morning, Judge! (*Starts out*) Say, Chief, couldn't you fix this for me?

CHIEF. Sorry, Mr. Baxter, but I make it a rule never to interfere with my boys.

PHIL. Oh, you're one of those on the level cops. (*Exits, followed by BRIGGS to hall.*)

CHIEF. No use wasting it, John.

JOHN. (*With the bottle and a drink poured in glass*) I don't blame you, Chief. We've got to respect the law. (*Hands the drink to CHIEF.*)

CHIEF. You don't own a car, do you?

JOHN. No.

CHIEF. I thought not. (*Drinks.*)

ALICE. (*Enters from garden. She is in tears*)
John——

JOHN. Yes, dear. (*Puts bottle in closet.*)

MAZIE. (*Enters*) Alice, don't pay attention to Mrs. Norris. She doesn't mean any harm.

ALICE. I can't help it.

MAZIE. Ed, darling, come on out and join the folks.

CHIEF. Right with you. Excuse us? Lovely party, Mrs. Bowen. (*Places his arm around MAZIE'S waist as they disappear.*)

JOHN. What is the matter?

ALICE. That dreadful Mrs. Norris——

JOHN. What's she done now?

ALICE. She's blaming me because Danny sold her husband that shaving cream.

JOHN. Don't pay any attention to her talk.

ALICE. And she's changed all the garden furniture now.

JOHN. (*Forcing a smile*) Well, what of it? We can move it all back again when she's gone. I don't mind her meddling at all. I only laugh at her.

(*Mirthlessly*) Ha, ha, ha! Anyhow, she's through now.

(*Enter DANNY with glass of water.*)

ALICE. Don't you believe it. You've no idea the way she talks to me right before everybody. It's got to a point where I just can't stand it. (*She sinks in chair, weeping softly.*)

JOHN. There, there, dear—don't cry.

DANNY. Are you talking about Mrs. Norris?

ALICE. I should say I am.

DANNY. Don't let her worry you.

JOHN. That's what I've been telling her.

DANNY. I could tell you more things about her.

ALICE. I wish you would.

JOHN. Now, wait a minute——

DANNY. Listen. I'll tell you what you do if she bothers you any more. You just say to her—Mrs. Norris, I'd like to ask you the reason why you forced your husband to discharge a certain red-headed stenographer.

ALICE. (*Looking up*) What's that?

DANNY. Just say—Mrs. Norris, I'd like to know the reason why you forced your husband to discharge a certain red-headed stenographer. That'll stop her.

JOHN. How did you hear about it?

DANNY. Charlie Twitchell was telling me. Milton's got a stenographer now with a beard and a crutch.

(*HILDA and MILTON have entered. MILTON, evidently trying to get away from his wife, comes on stage first.*)

MILTON. Now, dear, please——

HILDA. (*As she enters*) You'll know better next time. Oh, Alice. Milton has convinced me that

you had nothing to do with that billy goat shaving cream——

ALICE. I tried to tell you.

HILDA. Oh, that's all right, dear. Don't you cry. Have you seen your bedroom since I fixed it?

ALICE. No, not yet. (*Cries.*)

HILDA. We moved your bed to the north end.

DANNY. Won't it be cold there?

HILDA. Ours is cold.

DANNY. I can imagine.

HILDA. It's much healthier. Then we put your dresser near the window.

DANNY. What for?

HILDA. Don't be silly. So that she could see herself in the mirror.

DANNY. What about the neighbors?

HILDA. (*To ALICE*) You should try to interest yourself more in the appearance of your home.

DANNY. Why, I thought she did.

HILDA. But you've got to study it. You've got no sense of decoration. (*DANNY pantomimes to ALICE to ask MRS. NORRIS about the red-headed woman.*)

ALICE. Why, Mrs. Norris, I'd like to know the reason why you forced your husband to discharge a certain red-headed stenographer.

HILDA. Oh! How dare you mention that subject? Milton! (*DANNY lets out laugh and exits.*) Have you been speaking of that woman?

MILTON. Not recently, dear.

HILDA. I'll leave here at once. You're evidently intentionally bringing up a matter that has given us a great deal of trouble and cost Milton a great deal of money—— And speaking of money—it occurs to me that you owe us quite a considerable amount and you'd better pay it when it comes due on Monday. I'm through keeping up your husband's book-

store. From now on it'll be *our* bookstore. (*Exits. MILTON follows her.*)

MILTON. (*As he reaches door*) Oh, why did you have to bring that up? (*ALICE cries. Exit MILTON.*)

JOHN. That suggestion of Danny's worked out beautifully.

ALICE. Oh, I'm sorry! I'll go right after her and apologize.

JOHN. No, you won't. You did the right thing. I'd have called her down myself if I hadn't been a coward.

(*DANNY enters from garden.*)

ALICE. Why, John!

JOHN. You're a better man than I am.

DANNY. Dan McGrew. (*Exits in dining room.*)

JOHN. I've made you stand for a lot just to make it easier for me. You're a great girl, and I'm telling you, you did the right thing. If we lose the bookstore, we'll lose it—that's all there is to that. Then you and I'll have the fun of starting all over again. We did it once and we can do it again. (*DANNY enters from dining room with tray of cocktails.*) What do we care? You love me, don't you?

ALICE. You know I do.

PHIL. (*Enters, a piece of waste in his hand. Wears overalls*) Well, of all the rotten luck!

DANNY. (*To PHIL*) Oh—I—I—didn't know that you and Flossie were married—many happy returns—no, that's for birthdays—— May all your troubles—is that part of your trousseau—— (*Exit garden.*)

PHIL. (*To JOHN*) If I wasn't a guest in your house I'd punch him in the jaw.

JOHN. I'm sorry.

PHIL. This is a great night for me. I had to crawl under my car to fix those lights, and on top of that—— Say, you got a mean cop out here. Says it'll cost me twenty-five for having my lights out. Where's my wife?

ALICE. She's out there talking to Danny Grundy.

PHIL. My God! What do you suppose he's telling her now? (*Laugh off R.C.*)

ALICE. Oh, it's all right—she's laughing.

PHIL. Yes, but what's she laughing at—that's what I want to know. (*Starts for the door*) I'm going to have it out with him right now.

JOHN. No, no—I wouldn't. (*Restraining him*) You've got to get rid of those things. Throw them in that closet. Things are beginning to get on your nerves.

PHIL. Well, can anybody blame me? A damage suit on my hands—a bum battery on my car—twenty-five dollars to give up in the morning, and this fellow Grundy talking about my wife.

JOHN. Your wife?

PHIL. I don't mind his roping me into that shaving cream business. When it comes to losing money, I'm game, but I won't stand his talking about my wife. He'll leave her name alone or I'll knock his damn head off!

JOHN. I don't blame you a bit. You and I'll settle affairs with that fellow later. But go in and keep calm—when you're as old as I am, you'll know how to control yourself. (*Pushing PHIL in closet; closes door.*)

ALICE. Every one of you are picking on poor Danny!

JOHN. I don't mind telling you it's all I can do to keep myself from going out there and murdering your future brother-in-law.

ALICE. John, you don't want to ruin our party?

JOHN. If you don't think the party's ruined already——

ALICE. What do you suppose Danny said?

JOHN. God knows. (*Laugh off L. Looking off.*)

DANNY. (*Off*) He forgot he was married and jumped out the window. (*Laughing off stage.*)

JOHN. There he is. Look at him! Look at the women laughing! Heaven knows what dirt he's dishing up now. I'm going to talk to him right now.

ALICE. Please, dear, for my sake!

MAZIE. (*Enters, laughing, from garden. PHIL enters from closet, sees MAZIE*) Your friend, Danny Grundy, may be an awful gossip, but he's terribly funny.

PHIL. Mazie!

MAZIE. Phil Baxter——!

ALICE. (*To JOHN*) They're old friends. (*They exeunt.*)

PHIL. I haven't seen you in years.

MAZIE. Don't make it too many years.

PHIL. Have you met my wife?

MAZIE. Yes, and she told me you'd had a quarrel.

PHIL. Did she tell you what about?

MAZIE. No, she was crying so she couldn't tell me——

PHIL. The quarrel was about you——

MAZIE. Me——?

PHIL. That fool Grundy told her about that night in the cabaret when you did the muscle dance and the police came in and pulled me out.

MAZIE. How could she know that I was the girl that did that dance?

PHIL. She doesn't know it was you. But mark my word, this fellow Grundy will dig it out before the night is over.

MAZIE. Why, he's never met me before tonight.

PHIL. That won't make any difference to him.

MAZIE. Oh, you're magnifying the whole thing. I think he's an awfully charming fellow.

PHIL. You do, eh? Well, he hasn't started after you yet.

MAZIE. How do you mean—hasn't started after me?

PHIL. I mean I never knew him to muff anyone. He'll dig up something, sure as you're born. He don't know that we used to like each other, does he, Mazie?

MAZIE. Why, no—how could he?

PHIL. I was awfully fond of you. Funny our meeting here, especially after I've had a row. Think of our being thrown together after all this time!

MAZIE. Think of it!

PHIL. Still single, I suppose?

MAZIE. No. I've married Ed Mason and we're terribly happy together.

PHIL. Chief Mason? Congratulations! You went on the concert stage after you quit the cabaret, didn't you?

MAZIE. Yes, I got sick of cabaret life. People seemed to think a girl couldn't be decent in those surroundings.

PHIL. No one can say anything against you, Mazie.

(DANNY and FLOSSIE enter from garden. DANNY pantomimes to FLOSSIE that she should make it up with PHIL and exits. FLOSSIE comes down.)

MAZIE. I know that.

PHIL. How are the folks?

MAZIE. They're well, thanks.

PHIL. Your dad and I belong to the same club.

MAZIE. Is that so?

FLOSSIE. Phil, Danny says we ought to make up. So I'm willing if you are.

PHIL. (*Rises, puts an arm about FLOSSIE*) Flossie dear, we shouldn't have quarreled in the first place.

MAZIE. (*Rises*) Now that's beautiful. People should start their married life without any secrets. Now I'm going to tell you the truth. I'm the girl that did that dance.

PHIL. (*Goes to MAZIE*) Mazie, you're a brick to come right out and tell her that.

FLOSSIE. Indeed! Well, you look it.

PHIL. (*To FLOSSIE*) You're not going to start that all over again?

FLOSSIE. I didn't start it.

PHIL. (*Following her up*) There's a lot of things that you haven't explained——

FLOSSIE. (*Facing him*) And there's a lot of things I don't intend to explain.

MAZIE. Now, take my advice—you're starting your married life all wrong.

FLOSSIE. I don't care for any advice from you.

PHIL. But I can explain.

FLOSSIE. I don't care for any explanations. (*Backing towards exit.*)

GERALD. (*Enters. To FLOSSIE*) Have you seen Anna?

FLOSSIE. (*Brushing past him to garden*) Oh, go to hell! (*Exits.*)

PHIL. (*Calling after her*) Now, Flossie!

CHIEF. (*Enters*) Oh, there you are, honey girl!

MAZIE. Excuse me, dear. Come on, Phil, you just can't have her thinking that you and I—— (*They go out.*)

GERALD. (*To CHIEF*) I beg your pardon. Have you seen Anna?

CHIEF. I think she went out that way.

GERALD. Thank you so much. (*Exits to garden.*)
CHIEF looks cautiously about, comes down to closet L., where he is about to pour a drink, when he hears

ANNA *coming and quietly closes the door, hiding inside the closet. Off*) Hello, Anna. I've been looking for you.

ANNA. (*Off*) Really?

ALICE. (*Off*) Oh, Gerald, I want to talk to you.

DANNY. (*Enters with ANNA*) I haven't had a chance to get a word in edgeways. When are we going to get married?

ANNA. I don't know.

DANNY. You don't know?

ANNA. I've got to have a serious talk with you.

DANNY. Oh, let's not be serious. You love me, don't you?

ANNA. Yes, I do, but I've got to have——

DANNY.

You can have anything you want,

If you love me and I love you,

Then everything is how do you do!

You see, I can do that poetry stuff, too.

MAZIE. (*Enters from garden*) Oh, I beg your pardon. I was looking for my husband——

DANNY. Maybe he's like a lot of other policemen. Never can find him when you want him.

MAZIE. (*Laughs*) I do think you're the funniest thing!

DANNY. I've had very few complaints lately.

MAZIE. Say, young man, do you know that you've caused trouble between the Baxters?

DANNY. Oh, she's just jealous because I told her about her husband having some fool girl do a muscle dance.

MAZIE. Did you ever meet his fool girl who did that muscle dance?

DANNY. I don't like muscles.

MAZIE. I see. Well, if you see my husband, tell him I'm looking for him. (*Exits to garden, laughingly.*)

DANNY. Great sense of humor.

ANNA. That's the kind of a couple I love—always looking for one another.

DANNY. Well, if they keep on looking, they'll find something——

ANNA. What do you mean?

DANNY. You know, I heard something funny about her.

ANNA. You did?

DANNY. You know, no one has ever met her family—they must be foreigners.

ANNA. She looks Spanish to me.

(*READY Phonograph No. 5.*)

DANNY. Yes, she looks Spanish. You know what they say, don't you?

ANNA. What?

DANNY. They say her folks have got colored blood. (*Closet door opens.*)

ANNA. (*Astonished*) Danny!

DANNY. That's what I hear. (*CHIEF is seen to be listening.*)

ANNA. Who told you?

DANNY. Charlie Twitchell.

ANNA. Twitchell?

DANNY. He's a friend o' mine.

ANNA. Why, you almost take my breath away.

DANNY. I don't know her very well. Charlie's met her. At the opening night of Lulu Bell. He heard her sing spirituals at a concert once, too.

ANNA. They say her voice is beautiful.

DANNY. Colortura—— Did you ever get a good look at her hair?

ANNA. It's very black, I remember.

DANNY. Rather fuzzy-wuzzy, isn't it?

ANNA. I never noticed.

DANNY. I wish I could get a look at her hands—they say that's what tells—that and the nose.

ANNA. The nose?

DANNY. If they haven't got that little piece of gristle on the tip of the nose—look out——

ANNA. I never knew that before.

DANNY. That and her finger-nails.

ANNA. Nails?

DANNY. You can see the blue underneath.

ANNA. (*Blankly*) Oh!

DANNY. I'll try to get a look at her hands during supper tonight. I hope to goodness I keep my fingers off her nose.

ANNA. But how could the Chief marry such a woman?

DANNY. He didn't know. Charlie Twitchell says he doesn't know *yet* who her folks are. She told Charlie her family descended from the Indians. Ha, ha! I suppose she told the Chief—him being a Chief——

(*PHONOGRAPH No. 5.*)

ANNA. (*Ingenuously*) That's what comes of people marrying without knowing all about each other.

DANNY. You're the only one I've told it to, dear. (*Listens. "Black Bottom."*)

ANNA. We don't want to miss that!

DANNY. We ought to go out and make Mazie feel at home. (*They go up. After exit, DANNY's voice off*) Haven't you found your husband yet?

MAZIE. (*Off*) No, but I will. (*MAZIE enters, dancing "Black Bottom," followed by GERALD. MAZIE dances down c. GERALD comes down; stands watching her.*)

GERALD. You're perfectly wonderful.

MAZIE. Do you like it?

GERALD. Yes—do it again.

MAZIE. I'll teach you how. (*MAZIE starts dancing again. CHIEF enters from closet, unseen by MAZIE or GERALD. As she is dancing, turns and sees*

CHIEF) Ed darling, I've been looking all over for you.

CHIEF. Yes?

MAZIE. You know Mr. Kenyon?

CHIEF. Yes.

MAZIE. (*Putting her hand on CHIEF*) You've never seen me do this before, have you, dear?

CHIEF. (*Looking at her nails*) No.

MAZIE. Have I got too much pink on my nails? (*Shows GERALD*) Have I?

GERALD. I should say they look a trifle blue.

MAZIE. Goodness, I hope not.

CHIEF. Your hair looks kinda different tonight, somehow.

MAZIE. Maybe I put on too much oil. I have to use oil to keep it from curling up.

GERALD. I admire fuzzy wuzzy hair.

MAZIE. (*To CHIEF*) Don't you want to dance, darling?

CHIEF. (*Puts his finger on her nose*) Isn't there a little speck on your nose?

MAZIE. Ed darling, you'll rub it all in. (*To GERALD*) Have I got any dust on my nose?

GERALD. I don't see any. I'd like to have a dance with you, Mrs. Mason.

MAZIE. Delighted. Come on, Ed darling—let's go out in the garden. (*They start up.*)

(*ALICE and DANNY enter from garden. ALICE carrying box of flowers.*)

DANNY. Hello, Chief.

ALICE. (*Pauses*) You know Mr. Grundy, Chief?

CHIEF. Yes, I know him.

DANNY. (*To CHIEF*) Having a good time?

CHIEF. I've had better.

MAZIE. Why, Ed, dear!

CHIEF. I mean—yes, I'm having a good time.

DANNY. What you need is a drink.

MAZIE. He never drinks.

DANNY. Who?

MAZIE. He can't drink, being the Chief of Police.

DANNY. (*Laughs*) We know something that he doesn't know, don't we?

MAZIE. What do you mean?

DANNY. Flossie told me.

MAZIE. (*Laughs*) You mean about that fool girl? (*They both laugh.*)

CHIEF. (*To DANNY*) I want you to keep your mouth shut.

DANNY. Oh, I won't say anything.

MAZIE. (*To CHIEF*) I'll tell you all about it when we get home.

DANNY. (*Looks at CHIEF. Puts his finger on the tip of his nose, winks at CHIEF*) She'll tell you all about it when we get home. (*Laughs.*)

GERALD. (*To MAZIE*) Well, are we going to have that dance?

MAZIE. Yes. (*To CHIEF*) Come on, darling. (*She and GERALD exit into garden.*)

CHIEF. Don't forget I told you to keep your mouth shut. (*Exits, looking back at DANNY.*)

DANNY. I won't say anything.

ALICE. What's the Chief talking about?

DANNY. (*Referring to bouquet in box that ALICE is carrying*) Ain't that beautiful? Don't say anything about it to Anna. I want to surprise her. Where can I hide it?

ALICE. (*Going to book case L.*) I'll show you—you can put it here. (*Gives her box. She puts it back of curtain on shelf.*)

DANNY. Say, where did you say that special bottle is?

ALICE. Right in the corner of that closet. (*DANNY goes L. to closet door.*) And Danny, I wish you'd be a little careful.

DANNY. Oh, I won't take much. I just want to put a drink or two in my flask. I like to keep it on me. (*Shows flask.*)

ALICE. I didn't mean that. I mean about people.

DANNY. Oh, don't you worry about that, Alice. I hear a lot of things, but I know enough to keep my mouth shut. (*CHIEF enters; hides in sofa R. DANNY is holding up bottle and in the closet*) Say, don't tell the Chief there's any stuff like this around here. He used to be a booze fighter.

ALICE. Not Chief Mason?

DANNY. That's what I hear.

ALICE. Oh, well, he has a wife to look after him now.

DANNY. Who, Mazie? Ha, ha! She's worse than he is.

ALICE. No!

DANNY. That's what I hear.

ALICE. I never heard *that* about her.

DANNY. Charlie Twitchell was telling me.

ALICE. She never drinks anything around here.

DANNY. She used to get soused on nigger gin.

ALICE. Danny, don't ever mention that to anybody.

DANNY. Oh, that's just between us—you know.

ALICE. Well, I hope so. (*DANNY goes in closet.*)

MAZIE. (*Enters from garden*) Alice, what do you suppose is the matter with my husband?

ALICE. I don't know, I'm sure.

MAZIE. He was in the garden and then he mysteriously disappeared. (*Crosses L.*)

ALICE. Do you suppose he could have heard anything?

MAZIE. About what?

ALICE. Oh, nothing. (*Looking at MAZIE.*)

MAZIE. Alice, what's the matter with you?

ALICE. Nothing.

MAZIE. Well, you're staring at me in the most



peculiar fashion. Is there something wrong with my hair? I'm going upstairs and take a look at myself. (*Starts up.*)

ALICE. Why, Mazie—— (*Follows her off into garden.*)

(CHIEF rises, enraged; draws pistol from his pocket.)

CHIEF. Damn him—the rotten gossip! (*He shoots at the closet door. The glass breaks in door.*)

(GERALD rushes in. The others come rushing in, mixed voices offstage.)

JOHN. What was that shot?

ALICE. Seemed to come from this room.

ANNA. I hope nothing's happened.

MAZIE. Sounded more like a blowout.

FLOSSIE. Seemed to me like the shot of a pistol.

(NOTE: All the foregoing lines are spoken together.

MAID and BUTLER have entered; everybody ad lib. in excitement. CHIEF, who has collapsed on chair R. alongside of table, is still holding pistol.)

JOHN. (*Seeing pistol*) What were you doing with that gun?

CHIEF. It went off by accident—it was an accident.

JOHN. Good God! It might have hurt someone.

(DANNY enters from closet, carrying battered flask.)

ANNA. Danny!

DANNY. Accident, eh? Didn't know it was load-

ed. I went in there for a shot, and look at the kind I got. That's the way a lot of accidents happen. (*Then turning to CHIEF*) The only time I ever knew Charlie Twitchell to be real angry was the day he had an accident just like that. Mrs. Katz, over in Bayside, happened to shoot right through the keyhole of her bedroom door, and Charlie came as near as that—(*Snaps fingers*)—to losing his eye.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: *The same as Acts I and II.*

A few minutes later.

DISCOVERED: ALICE, MAZIE, FLOSSIE and ANNA on stage. They stand looking up stairs. ALICE is nearest the door.

ALICE. (*After a pause, looks at MAZIE, who turns and looks at the other two girls*) Isn't that just like a lot of men, to go upstairs and leave us down here, to draw our own conclusions? (*Goes down L.*)

FLOSSIE. (*Goes to chair R. After pause*) Well, isn't someone going to call the police?

MAZIE. My husband is the police.

ANNA. (*Goes R.*) Then he'd better lock himself up so he can't shoot anybody.

MAZIE. He *didn't* shoot anybody—he said it was an *accident*.

FLOSSIE. Just the same, I don't believe it was an accident.

MAZIE. How can you say such a thing?

ALICE. You shouldn't talk that way—of course it was an accident.

ANNA. Well, there's something *very* peculiar about it to me.

ALICE. Why would the Chief have done a thing like that intentionally?

FLOSSIE. Because your friend, Mr. Grundy, talks too much. (*Sits R.*)

ALICE. Oh, you mustn't take it all so seriously. Danny is all right when you understand him. (*Sits on sofa.*)

ANNA. I wish he didn't do those things.

MAZIE. I guess he doesn't know how much harm they do.

FLOSSIE. You would think my husband was a jailbird to hear him talk.

MAZIE. I heard that he said my husband was a booze fighter, but that's just nonsense. (*The above lines are all timed.*) Will somebody please tell me who on earth is Charlie Twitchell?

ANNA. I wonder who he is.

ALICE. Some friend of Danny's

MAZIE. I don't believe there is any such person. Someone ought to ask him.

FLOSSIE. I wouldn't even talk to him.

(*Enter GERALD from the garden, followed by DANNY.*)

GERALD. I'll say one thing, Mr. Grundy. You've got a lot of nerve—you don't seem to be nervous about this shooting.

DANNY. Why should I be nervous? There is no damage done, except to the flask, and that wasn't mine—it belongs to Charlie Twitchell. Where's all the men? (*Pauses*) What are you playing—ask me another? (*Turns to ANNA and FLOSSIE*) Where are all the men? (*ANNA, without replying, rises and exits to garden. To FLOSSIE*) Eh—— (*FLOSSIE rises and exits to garden. DANNY then turns to MAZIE*) Where is the Big Chief? (*Leaning over davenport. To ALICE*) What's the matter with everybody? (*ALICE rises and exits to dining room. To GERALD*) Where's all the men? Don't know, I guess. (*BRIGGS comes on and turns to exit as DAN-*

NY *sees him.*) Ah-h! (BRIGGS *stops.*) Where's all the men?

BRIGGS. Upstairs, sir. (*Exits.*)

DANNY. I should have asked you in the first place. Ain't that the way with every party? The men go off in one corner, and the women settle down somewhere else. Ought to be a warning to you, Gerald.

GERALD. Warning to me?

DANNY. Haven't you been sort of thinking of getting married?

GERALD. Yes, I was, but I've changed my mind.

DANNY. Oh, that's fine!

GERALD. You think so?

DANNY. Yes.

GERALD. I'm so glad we agree. You know it seems as if married people never did anything but fight.

DANNY. Well, women may fight, but they make up.

GERALD. Ha, ha! I got that one. You can't kiss any of them nowadays without it showing.

DANNY. That's a little off color.

GERALD. Oh—I forgot something.

DANNY. What did you forget?

GERALD. No one is supposed to talk to you. (*Exits up stairs.*)

(DANNY *starts to follow; thinks better of it. As he turns, he feels a twitching pain in his left arm. He turns back cuff of shirt, and finds that he is wounded. He gets whiskey from closet, about to pour some booze on wound, first takes a drink, then cauterizes the wound. As he is about to bind it up with his handkerchief, ALICE enters.*)

ALICE. Danny—I just can't stay angry. (*Sees something is wrong. Going to him*) What is it?

DANNY. S-sh!—it's nothing——

ALICE. Danny! You were hit.

DANNY. It's just a little piece of glass.

ALICE. I'll call a doctor. (*Starts to go.*)

DANNY. It's bad enough as it is.

ALICE. I'll get something—— (*Exits, dining room.*)

DANNY. I'm doing all right. (*Drinks.*)

ALICE. (*Enters with kit; puts cotton and tape on DANNY'S arm*) You're such a nice boy, Danny.

DANNY. Nice boy, slightly wounded.

ALICE. If you only had a little diplomacy!

DANNY. That's where I thought I was *good*.

ALICE. Just see what you did to Mrs. Norris.

DANNY. Didn't you want to get rid of her?

ALICE. (*Dubiously*) Y-es——

DANNY. Didn't I tell you something that sent her about her business?

ALICE. It did more than that.

DANNY. I don't follow you——

ALICE. She's going to take our bookstore away from us.

DANNY. Take your bookstore? You mean John is selling it to them?

ALICE. No, Danny. John borrowed money from them.

DANNY. And he can't pay it back?

ALICE. No.

DANNY. Oh, that's tough.

ALICE. So you see that telling her about that red-headed stenographer didn't help matters.

DANNY. (*Thoughtfully*) Yes, I can see that it wouldn't. But you didn't tell me that you owed them money.

ALICE. We didn't want anyone to know it.

DANNY. I won't speak of it. Of course, this is just between ourselves.

(BRIGGS *enters.*)

BRIGGS. Beg pardon—Mrs. Bowen——

ALICE. Yes.

BRIGGS. Mr. Norris has come back.

ALICE. Norris—what for?

BRIGGS. Says his wife lost a scarf here.

ALICE. She must have dropped it while fussing with the furniture. (MILTON *enters*. ALICE *is very nice to him*. DANNY *puts bottle back*.) Come in, Mr. Norris. (MILTON *comes forward*.) Where is Mrs. Norris?

MILTON. She's waiting outside in the car.

ALICE. The butler tells me she lost her scarf here.

MILTON. She didn't miss it until we got halfway home. You see, she borrowed it for your party.

ALICE. I see.

MILTON. Ahem!—I hope you won't tell her I mentioned that.

ALICE. We'll look for it at once. Briggs, you look around upstairs. Perhaps she left it in the dining room when she was fussing around in there. I'll see—— Danny, are you sure you are all right?

DANNY. I'll be all right, Alice. Don't bother about me. (ALICE *exits dining room*.)

MILTON. What's wrong with you?

DANNY. There's nothing wrong with me, but there's something wrong with you.

MILTON. What do you mean?

DANNY. How long have you known John Bowen?

MILTON. Oh, a long time—eight or ten years.

DANNY. That's long enough to get a line on a man, isn't it?

MILTON. What are you driving at?

DANNY. I mean you've known him long enough to realize he's a regular fellow—the kind of a man you'd like to see get along.

MILTON. I wish him every success.

DANNY. And you're going to take his bookstore away.

MILTON. (*Looks about*) My wife has decided—

DANNY. What do you want to let your wife decide everything for you for? My friend Charlie Twitchell could tell you some things about her.

MILTON. He could?

DANNY. Yes, he could.

MILTON. What?

DANNY. (*About to tell*) No . . . I promised Anna I wouldn't tell.

MILTON. That isn't fair—you've got my curiosity aroused.

DANNY. Maybe I'll tell you if we can square this. Now, John Bowen owes you some money, doesn't he?

MILTON. I don't care to discuss my private affairs with a third party.

DANNY. I'm not what you call a third party. I'm going to be his brother-in-law.

MILTON. (*Coldly*) Congratulations.

DANNY. Now I want you to tell me if you're going to take his bookstore away from him.

MILTON. I'm afraid I'll have to. You see, my wife and Mrs. Bowen—as I said before, I don't care to discuss the subject. I wonder where she could have left that scarf—— (*Looks about. Crosses R.*)

DANNY. (*Going up to him and forcing him to quit searching about the room*) Never mind the scarf! Now, you listen to me. You can't take the store if the note is paid—can you?

MILTON. Of course not.

DANNY. Well, then—let's suppose that I pay that note.

MILTON. Let's suppose it.

DANNY. Yes, it's all the same to you who pays it?

MILTON. Yes, but you're not serious.

DANNY. Yes, I am, Mr. Norris. John Bowen has been a good friend to me. He loaned me money once and gave me a start in business. I paid him back, of course, but that isn't the point. When you're down and out, and a fellow comes along and helps you on the hurdles, there's more to it than money. There's something you can't pay back. (*Slight pause.*) I want you to take my check for that note.

MILTON. Well, that's your affair.

DANNY. That's exactly what it is. My check book is upstairs in my satchel. (*Starts toward stairs and returns*) How much is that note for?

MILTON. Twelve thousand dollars.

DANNY. Ooooo—

MILTON. What's the matter?

DANNY. Good-bye, bungalow.

MILTON. (*Puzzled*) Bungalow?

DANNY. That's just about all I've got—twelve thousand and two dollars.

MILTON. Then you don't feel quite so generous?

DANNY. Well, I didn't know it was going to be—but that's all right. You just make out a receipt. (*Points to table R.*)

MILTON. (*Going to table R.*) Just as you say.

DANNY. (*Who has started L., turns again*) Oh, and another thing—I don't know just how John will feel about this, so you'd better not say anything about it—do you mind?

MILTON. Not at all.

DANNY. I'll explain it to him later, myself. This is just between ourselves—you know—you know. (*GERALD enters from stairs. DANNY goes to him*) Oh—no. (*Crosses, goes to exit in hall, then turns to GERALD again; same bus. again.*) Oh—yes. I might give you a job writing ads for me. If you've

got to write poetry, why don't you do something like this:

Silence is golden,
Get all you can gather;
You've got to use Whiskoff
To make a good lather.

GERALD. I like that very much—I'll write that—that's very good.

DANNY. I wrote that one—you write one of your own. (*Exits upstairs. GERALD goes R.*)

MAZIE. (*Enters from garden, followed by FLOSSIE*) They haven't come down stairs yet.

FLOSSIE. Your husband was the cause of all this trouble.

MAZIE. How can you say that? I know enough about you to hang you.

FLOSSIE. Will you answer one question honestly?

MAZIE. What?

FLOSSIE. Is my husband the father of your child?

MAZIE. How perfectly ridiculous.

FLOSSIE. Indeed!

MAZIE. I don't know who its father is.

FLOSSIE. What?

MAZIE. I adopted the child from a foundling asylum.

(*ALICE enters from dining room.*)

FLOSSIE. Humph! That's what they all say. (*Exits to garden.*)

ALICE. What's she talking about?

MAZIE. This isn't a party—it's a battle of Gettysburg.

ALICE. Oh, dear! (*Exits to dining room.*)

MAZIE. Mr. Kenyon—will you go upstairs and

ask my husband to please come down here on the porch—I want to talk to him. (*Exits to garden.*)

GERALD. Uncle Milton, you're a married man.

MILTON. Yes.

GERALD. Perhaps you could give me some advice.

MILTON. Don't. (*GERALD starts for stairs. DANNY enters with check.*)

GERALD. (*To DANNY as he almost bumps into him*) I beg your pardon.

DANNY. What for?

GERALD. I don't know.

DANNY. Well, make up your mind—you know you're not supposed to talk to me, anyway. (*GERALD exits upstairs. MILTON finishes writing receipt and rises from table as DANNY enters. DANNY crosses R. to MILTON*) Here's your check, Mr. Norris. (*MILTON looks at check.*) Oh, it's good. It wouldn't be if John owed you two more dollars.

MILTON. (*Taking check, which he continues to hold*) I know you're honest. (*He hands DANNY receipt. DANNY glances over receipt.*)

DANNY. That will cancel Bowen's debt.

MILTON. Yes.

DANNY. (*Gets his fingers on the check, which NORRIS is still holding out, takes check*) You let me have that check back, and I'll put it in Whiskoff for you—that'll buy you twelve hundred shares and parlay up into a lot of money.

MILTON. (*Grabs it from DANNY's fingers*) Thank you very much, but I don't want any more shares. In fact, I hope I never hear the word "Whiskoff" again.

DANNY. All right—all right—but some day you'll come to me on your knees and beg me for more of that stock, and I won't talk to you—I won't even talk about you. (*Starts up.*)

HILDA. (*Enters from hallway*) Young man—I'm glad you're here.

DANNY. I guess everybody is satisfied.

HILDA. I want to give you a piece of my mind.

DANNY. I hope you're not tearing it up. (*Exit DANNY hurriedly to porch.*)

HILDA. Milton, are you going to stay in here all night?

MILTON. (*Who by this time is under a table*) I've been looking for your scarf, dear.

HILDA. But I told you to look upstairs.

MILTON. Did you tell me it was there, dear?—I didn't remember.

HILDA. There have been a lot of things this evening that you didn't remember. You've wasted half an hour.

MILTON. (*With almost a grin*) Not entirely wasted, darling.

HILDA. What do you mean?

MILTON. I've got the money Bowen owes me.

HILDA. You've been paid?

MILTON. (*Patting pocket*) Got the check here.

ALICE. (*Entering*) It's not in there—— Oh, Mrs. Norris! I'm so glad you've come back. We couldn't find your scarf.

HILDA. (*Picking up scarf behind sofa and showing it*) I knew where to find it. Come, Milton.

ALICE. Just a minute, dear—won't you stay? I'm terribly sorry for having mentioned that——

HILDA. You're not going to mention her again?

ALICE. Oh, no—no, but I do apologize. Anyway, we're old friends. We have just made some cocktails. We'll have supper in just a few minutes. Please stay.

HILDA. Will you just let me place this chair over here?

ALICE. Why, yes. I think it's much better over there. (*HILDA places chair.*)

HILDA. We'll stay. Milton, you may have one cocktail—and only one. (MILTON, *pleased, goes off-stage with HILDA.*)

DANNY. (*Enters. To ALICE as she is going out*) Say, what's the idea of the boycott—nobody wants to speak to me.

ALICE. Danny—you've only yourself to blame. (*Exits.*)

PHIL. (*Enters*) Say—I want to speak to you.

DANNY. Well, I'm glad somebody wants to talk to me.

PHIL. (*Looks DANNY over from head to foot*) I'm a guest here and I don't want to cause any trouble, but I wish you'd come outside.

DANNY. I've just been outside.

PHIL. You've been telling Flossie a lot of things you know and a lot you don't know about me. You've even gossiped about her. I didn't say anything at the time—I wanted to see how far you'd go. Things have happened since you've been away. Flossie is now my wife. (JOHN *enters from stairs L.*) From now on, you'll leave her name alone or I'll knock your damn head off!

JOHN. And I don't blame you a bit, but not now with the ladies around——

PHIL. I beg your pardon.

DANNY. That's all right.

JOHN. Just look out here. (FLOSSIE *is heard to cry. JOHN goes up, looks off.*) See Flossie there, crying. Come on, Phil, make up with her.

PHIL. No, I'm going home.

JOHN. No, no, you're not—you two are on your honeymoon. Don't let a little gossip spoil it. I'm older than you and I want to tell you something. Marriage is for better or for worse. There are two other "fors" in it, too: Forgive and forget. (*Pull-*

ing him off to veranda) Now you just go out there and tell her you're sorry.

PHIL. Sorry for what?

JOHN. You don't have to tell a woman what you're sorry for—just say you're sorry. Go make it up with her. *(He gets PHIL to go to FLOSSIE. DANNY stands dazed for a moment. To DANNY)* Danny, I don't wish you any hard luck, but just the same it would be a real blessing to all of your friends if you should happen to lose your voice.

CHIEF. *(Enters from stairs L., looks at DANNY and comes to him with determined air)* Say, you—

JOHN. Chief!

DANNY. Chief, you're always looking on the dark side of things. What you need is a little light on the subject.

CHIEF. Say! You're lucky to be alive.

DANNY. I should say I am, after your carelessness with that gun.

CHIEF. That wasn't carelessness—it was intentional. I tried to shoot you through that door.

JOHN. *(Comes down L.)* Why, Chief, you said it was an accident.

(Enter MAZIE from veranda. She stays upstage and hears the following scene.)

CHIEF. Well, it wasn't. I overheard him say something about my wife that I just couldn't stand.

DANNY. Probably something that Charlie Twitchell told me.

JOHN. What was it?

CHIEF. Well, I'll tell you what it was. *(Crosses to JOHN)* He said my wife had colored blood.

MAZIE. How dare you say a thing like that? I ask you—how dare you?

DANNY. *(Nonplussed for the moment)* Ma'am?

MAZIE. You heard what I said. Do you know I

could sue you for a million dollars? (DANNY smiles.)

JOHN. He hasn't got a dollar.

DANNY. I have so—I got two dollars.

MAZIE. How did you get hold of this extraordinary information?

DANNY. Charlie Twitchell told me.

MAZIE. And who is Charlie Twitchell?

DANNY. Works for the Gas Company.

MAZIE. (To CHIEF) Do you know Charlie Twitchell?

CHIEF. No, ma'am. Mazie darling, I'm so unhappy!

MAZIE. Well, you ought to be, and you're just as bad to have believed him!

CHIEF. Yes, ma'am, but I didn't believe him—that's why I tried to shoot him——

MAZIE. Oh, then you *did* try to shoot him?

CHIEF. Yes, ma'am, to defend your honor.

MAZIE. Did you hear that?

DANNY. What?

MAZIE. Honor—H-O-N-O-R——

DANNY. I know how to spell it.

MAZIE. (To CHIEF) You don't believe any of that nonsense, do you?

CHIEF. I don't even like to think about it.

JOHN. Now, don't be too hard on him, Mrs. Mason. The Chief told me he had never met your family.

MAZIE. Well, Phil Baxter has.

CHIEF. He has?

MAZIE. He and my dad are members of the same club.

DANNY. Club Alabam——

MAZIE. What?

DANNY. I didn't say anything. (Sings) Alabam——

MAZIE. I am surprised at you.

CHIEF. I don't blame you—for a minute there, I did see red.

MAZIE. Well, you've got a right to see red, dear, for my great-grandfather was an Indian chief.

CHIEF. I'm a Chief and I wish I was an Indian.

JOHN. That's the stuff— (*Goes between CHIEF and MAZIE*) Now come on out and have a drink of red liquor.

MAZIE. (*As they go up*) I don't drink red liquor—I sometimes like a little gin. (*DANNY laughs.*)

CHIEF. (*Turning back*) Gin! Gin! Did you hear that?

JOHN. Never mind what he said. (*JOHN, CHIEF and MAZIE exit to dining room.*)

DANNY. (*Crosses to sofa L.; he revolves it over in his mind*) Blackfoot Indians.

MAZIE. (*Offstage*) But you did believe him, and that's the worst part of it.

CHIEF. (*Offstage*) But honey darling——

JOHN. (*Offstage*) Now, Chief, please——

CHIEF. (*Enters from dining room*) All right! All right! (*Closes door*) Don't think I'm through with you yet.

DANNY. What do you want to be like that for—what's the good of staying sore at me? I only repeat what I hear.

CHIEF. You hear too damn much!

DANNY. Is that so? Well, it might be a good thing for you if you heard a little more. You call yourself a cop and you've been working a month on this Baldwin case and where are you? If Charlie Twitchell was on that case he'd have it cleaned up like that. (*Snaps.*)

CHIEF. Charlie Twitchell would—eh?

DANNY. Like that. (*Snaps fingers*) Why, he told me—— (*Laughs.*)

CHIEF. What did he tell you?

DANNY. Never mind what he told me.

CHIEF. Where can I find him?

DANNY. Who?

CHIEF. Twitchell.

DANNY. I don't know.

CHIEF. You don't know.

DANNY. Sure.

CHIEF. Sure what?

DANNY. Sure I don't know.

CHIEF. When did you see him last?

DANNY. Who?

CHIEF. Twitchell.

DANNY. (*Stalling*) Let's see—Thursday—Friday—Saturday a week ago.

CHIEF. A week ago what?

DANNY. A week ago Saturday.

CHIEF. Bowen told me that you just got back from the South today.

DANNY. Who?

CHIEF. Bowen—your friend John Bowen.

DANNY. That's right.

CHIEF. You mean that's right you just got back?

DANNY. I mean that's right—he's my friend.

CHIEF. Then how could you have seen Twitchell Thursday or Friday?

DANNY. I got a bicycle.

CHIEF. You've been in the South six months, haven't you?

DANNY. Who said that?

CHIEF. You did.

DANNY. I did not—you said Bowen said I said I saw him.

ANNA. (*Enters from dining room*) Oh!

CHIEF. (*To ANNA*) Pardon me, Miss. (*To DANNY*) You've got something in that thing that you use for a head and I'm going to find out what it is. (*Exits to hall.*)

ANNA. Well, Danny, this looks like the finish.

DANNY. No—it's just the beginning. Look what I had sent down for you. (*Hands the flowers to ANNA, who takes them rather unwillingly.*) Don't pay any attention to the bouquet. See that little dingle-dangle? Open that. (*ANNA opens the case and takes out a solitaire diamond ring; as she sees it she is almost in tears.*) Two more payments and it's yours.

ANNA. Danny, I'm going to take the flowers, but I can't take the ring. (*Gives him back the ring.*)

DANNY. Why not?

ANNA. Because you've broken your promise. You swore to me that you'd never talk about folks again.

DANNY. Well, I won't, dear, from now on.

ANNA. Oh, it's no use. It would only mean trouble, not only for us but for everybody we know. I'll never care for anyone else, but we've just got to call our engagement off.

DANNY. (*Choking*) Oh, you don't mean it—Why, that's the worst luck in the world, to break an engagement—it's worse than breaking a mirror. Jimmie Johnson told me—

ANNA. You see, there you go again, with your gossip.

DANNY. I didn't mean to make any trouble, honestly I didn't.

ANNA. But you did.

DANNY. Please, Anna, don't you turn against me.

ANNA. There's nothing else to do. Don't you suppose it hurts me as much as it does you? But I just can't go through life with a man that is always making trouble. Oh, what's the use! (*Runs up stairs. Exits.*)

(*Enter JOHN. He sees ANNA go off, crying,*)

JOHN. Now look at her—and you've done that, too. We're having a hell of a party. There's no use mincing matters any longer, Danny. It's come to a point where I've got to tell you the truth. It was bad enough after roping all your friends in on a fool business deal, but when it comes to breaking up their families with your infernal gab, it's time to call a halt. You've been coming here to see Anna. For her sake I tried to make the best of it, but I'm through now. This is my house and the sooner you get out the better.

DANNY. When you say get out—do you mean—outside?

JOHN. I mean just that.

DANNY. You know, John, it's a funny thing, though—every time I start to talk to somebody, they always say, "What?" So naturally, in my anxiety to be sociable—I let out a lot of gab and they love it—until it hits one of them, then it's different. But you can't take "Get out" two ways. Say good-night to Alice for me, will you?

JOHN. Yes.

DANNY. (*In doorway*) And I want you to know I'm through. After this, if I can't say something good about people, I'm going to keep my damn mouth shut.

(*ANNA comes down with bundle of letters tied with ribbon, offers them to DANNY. He does not take them. He slowly exits upstairs.*)

ANNA. You give them to him, John—I just can't.

MILTON. (*Enters*) John! (*Carrying cocktail glass. ANNA seeing MILTON, exits to dining room*) This is a lovely party. Never saw such a lot of happy people. Your wife knows how to do these things, John.

JOHN. Glad you're enjoying yourself, Mr. Norris. I'd like to talk to you again about that money I owe you.

MILTON. What's the use? It's all paid now. Everything's all right.

JOHN. Everything is paid!

MILTON. Yes—Grundy told me not to mention it, but that's silly.

JOHN. Told you not to mention what?

MILTON. Told me not to mention that he paid the money for you.

JOHN. Who paid the money for me?

MILTON. Danny Grundy gave me his check to pay the money you owed me.

JOHN. You say Danny paid you the twelve thousand?

MILTON. Said you had been a good friend to him.

JOHN. I've been a great friend.

MILTON. He thinks a lot of you. Said he could never repay your kindness.

JOHN. Well, he has, and I'm ashamed of myself.

MILTON. I should think you would be. He gave up his last dollar to help you out.

JOHN. You know this just knocks me a twister.

(HILDA enters.)

MILTON. I should think it would. You know, John, these cocktails are simply delicious. If you don't mind, I'll go out and sneak a couple more. (*He turns and sees HILDA.*)

HILDA. You'll sneak right along with me.

MILTON. Oh, I've only had one, dear.

HILDA. I know when you've had enough. You've had three—I've counted them. (*Exeunt garden.*)

CHIEF. (*Enters from dining room*) Where's Grundy?

JOHN. . He's upstairs packing his bag—— He thinks he's leaving the house, but he isn't.

CHIEF. You bet he isn't. I think he knows something about this Baldwin affair, but I can't get it out of him.

JOHN. That's nonsense, Chief. He couldn't know anything about it. He's been in the South for six months.

CHIEF. Then what's he in such a hurry for to leave the house?

JOHN. I ordered him out—largely because of the things he said about your wife.

CHIEF. That's very nice of you, John. But just the same he'll be arrested the minute he tries to leave here. Do you mind if I use your telephone?

JOHN. No—but I tell you this is all nonsense. *(CHIEF exits. Places letters on table then starts toward stairs)* Danny——

(Enter BRIGGS. Seeing JOHN, rather surprised.)

BRIGGS. Oh—I beg pardon. *(Stops)* I said Mr. Grundy was in here.

JOHN. Who did you say it to?

BRIGGS. To a gentleman who has just called and seems very anxious to see him.

JOHN. Did he give any name?

BRIGGS. Yes, sir. Foster.

JOHN. Foster? *(BRIGGS steps up to the entrance. Enter MR. FOSTER. BRIGGS exits.)*

FOSTER. How do you do, Mr. Grundy? I must apologize for intruding in this way, particularly as I understand you are a guest at a party here, but Mr. Williams wanted me to be sure to see you——

JOHN. Wait a minute.

FOSTER. I'm Mr. Williams's private secretary.

JOHN. Who is Mr. Williams?

FOSTER. Good heavens, you ought to know. You've been chasing after him long enough.

JOHN. But you see, Mr.——

FOSTER. I've got to get this to you quick before anyone comes in.

JOHN. (*Rapidly*) What?

FOSTER. Are any of these friends of yours here tonight—the ones you told Mr. Williams about?

JOHN. Why—er—which ones?

FOSTER. The ones you sold that stock to.

JOHN. The shaving cream stock?

FOSTER. (*Surprised*) Of course.

JOHN. You can bet they're here.

FOSTER. Still worried, I suppose.

JOHN. No. They've given up worrying.

FOSTER. (*Disappointed*) How long since? Mr. Williams was under the impression these friends of yours who had bought stock were very anxious——

JOHN. Mr. Williams was dead right.

FOSTER. (*With satisfaction*) Ah—that's better. Mr. Williams wanted me to tell you this—in the strictest confidence. You tell your friends that you can't bear their thinking you've swindled them, that you've managed to dig up the money and will take the stock off their hands——

JOHN. Where is the money coming from?

FOSTER. The money's in the bank right now. We'll buy it back and you and Mr. Williams will split on the profit.

JOHN. Profit—what profit?

FOSTER. Why, our company will take it now at four times what you sold it for.

JOHN. They will?

FOSTER. And if you hang on and work it right—
(*Enter ALICE.*)

ALICE. Oh, I beg your pardon, dear.

JOHN. Mr. Foster—this is my wife.

FOSTER. How do you do?

JOHN. Mr. Foster represents the Consolidated Drug Company and Whiskoff is all right!

ALICE. John! (*Embraces him.*)

JOHN. Mr. Foster—won't you stay and be our guest at supper? We're having an awfully happy little party.

ALICE. Do stay, Mr. Foster—we'd love to have you.

FOSTER. Why, thank you—I believe I will.

JOHN. Briggs—Briggs—— (*BRIGGS enters from hall.*) Take Mr. Foster's hat and coat. (*He does so.*)

ALICE. We're going in to supper in just a few minutes, now.

JOHN. Take Mr. Foster out on the porch to meet some of our friends.

ALICE. (*As they go out*) We're awfully happy to have you with us. (*JOHN goes out with them.*)

JOHN. (*After they have made their exit*) I don't mind telling you I'm not Danny Grundy—I'm John Bowen.

FOSTER. (*Offstage*) What!

(*As FOSTER and ALICE exeunt out of sight, DANNY has come down the stairs, carrying his satchel. He takes one peek into the room and, with a sigh, turns around to go out through hallway. By this time, JOHN has rushed across stage, with intention of going up stairs. DANNY is around stairs, out of sight, but JOHN sees him.*)

JOHN. Danny—Danny! Come back here. (*DANNY enters. Throwing his arms around him*) My dear old friend—what can I say? How can I thank you? Give me that grip. (*DANNY offers hand.*) I mean your bag. Here—Briggs! Briggs! (*BRIGGS*

enters from hallway.) Take this bag and put it up in Mr. Grundy's room. He's changed his mind. He's going to stay. (*BRIGGS takes bag from JOHN and exits up stairs. To DANNY*) I've had you all wrong. Now you come right here and sit down and let me do what I can to square myself for your generosity.

DANNY. (*Suddenly realizing what he means*) Oh—Norris shouldn't have told you. He's always gabbin'—I hate a fellow that talks——

JOHN. Yes, he should, and I've got more news for you. Williams's secretary, Foster, is here.

DANNY. (*Jumping up*) You mean the Consolidated?

JOHN. Do you want to sell me some more shares of that stock? If I had a hundred thousand, I'd put every dollar in it.

DANNY. I always told you that Whiskoff is all right.

JOHN. You bet it's all right. This fellow Foster offered me twice the amount I paid for it. Danny, you've made us all rich.

DANNY. Where is that guy Foster? Don't let him get away from me.

JOHN. Don't worry. He's out there with the folks. They're giving him a drink.

DANNY. Have they been analyzed? I don't want any harm to come to him.

JOHN. And I don't want anything to happen to you, Danny.

DANNY. If you can square me with Anna, no matter what happens to me I'm ahead.

JOHN. I'll do the best I can for you with Anna, but don't try to leave the house.

DANNY. I don't want to leave the house—that was your idea.

JOHN. (*Suddenly*) Danny, do you know anything about the killing of Mrs. Baldwin?

DANNY. I know a lot of people waiting their turn.

JOHN. Do you know, Danny—you talk too much.

DANNY. Oh, I don't know—everybody likes to hear me gab—and I like to hear me gab, that's the way I sell a lot of stock.

JOHN. (*Smiles, then turns to entrance and calls*) Anna.

ANNA. (*Offstage*) Yes.

JOHN. Come here, dear. (*ANNA enters.*) Anna, I'm going to ask you something that means an awful lot to me.

ANNA. What is it?

JOHN. Danny has proven a greater friend than any man I've ever known. I can never repay him for what he's done. You'd be willing to do something for me, wouldn't you, Anna?

ANNA. (*Wonderingly*) Of course, John.

JOHN. Then I want to ask you just one question. Will you marry Danny Grundy?

ANNA. Oh, John! (*Smiling through her tears*) This is so sudden!

JOHN. You've got to, Anna——

ANNA. But, John——

JOHN. I know you love him. I know how much your sister thinks of him, and as for me—well, I'm just crazy about him.

ANNA. Oh, I don't know what to say.

JOHN. Yes, you do. Now, how would you like me to leave you two together to talk it all over? (*DANNY and ANNA stand rather stupidly, away from each other.*) You would? That's fine. It'll be a secret engagement, one of Danny's famous secrets—that he got from Charlie Twitchell. (*Exits gleefully into garden.*)

(*ANNA and DANNY stand just where they have been,*

continuing to keep apart for the next few speeches.)

DANNY. Anna, I couldn't blame you if you never spoke to me again, but if you could only forgive me——

MILTON. (*Enters from garden*) My dear Mr. Grundy—here is your check. I've reconsidered it. I would like some more of that stock.

DANNY. I'm sorry, but the boat sailed Friday.

MILTON. You mean you're sailing Friday?

DANNY. I have sailed.

CHIEF. (*Enters from garden*) Grundy, I owe you an apology.

DANNY. What for? For not killing me?

CHIEF. No, that was a mistake.

DANNY. You mean you want to try it again?

CHIEF. No, I mean about that stock. Can I get some more of it?

MILTON. He sailed last Friday.

DANNY. (*Laughs*) Yes, I sailed last Friday.

PHIL. (*Enters from garden*) Say, Danny, I want to talk to you about that stock——

DANNY, CHIEF and MILTON. (*In unison*) The boat sailed Friday.

GERALD. (*Enters from hall*) I've just hit on a great idea——

DANNY. If you love me, please answer my letter——

(MILTON, CHIEF, PHIL and GERALD are back of davenport. DANNY with back to audience. The men talk ad lib. BRIGGS is seen to cross to the dining room.)

JOHN. (*Enters from garden, followed by all the ladies and Mr. FOSTER*) Ladies and gentlemen—I



Danny: "Yes, I sailed last Friday."

want to announce the engagement of my wife's sister, Anna, to my dearest friend, Mr. Danny Grundy.

(ANNA stands R. and the ladies rush to her with congratulations *ad lib.* They cross to DANNY and congratulate him.)

BRIGGS. (*Enters from dining room*) Supper is now served.

ALICE. Let's all go to supper. Flossie, you go with the Chief—— (*They start.*) Mazie, take Phil——Mr. Foster, you will go with Mrs. Norris. Mr. Norris, you go with me—— You—— (*To GERALD*) I want you both! (*All exit, laughing and chatting as they go.*)

JOHN. Danny, I think you're the most wonderful guy in the world, but for the love of Mike, keep your mouth shut! (*Exit, dining room.*)

ANNA. (*Looks at DANNY*) Well, aren't you going to say something? (*DANNY indicates he dare not speak, then pantomimes a proposal of marriage. Stands watching him*) Yes. (*Goes to him.*)

DANNY. I know a dandy minister.

ANNA. Who?

DANNY. The Reverend Dr. Howell.

ANNA. Oh, do you know him?

DANNY. Sure. I know his wife, too. Used to be phone operator at the Biltmore.

CURTAIN

PROPERTY PLOT

Carpet.
Portieres at window.
Pictures on wall.
Picture of man over arch.
Glass to break in door L.
Curtains with valance on book shelves.
Candlesticks on mantel.
Fire screens for fireplace.
Fender for fireplace.
Large sofa facing fireplace.
Davano table next to sofa.
Armchair L. of table.
Stool or bench L. of chair.
Large sofa L., facing audience.
End table R. of sofa.
Odd looking chair R. of end table.
Small consul table against bookcases L.
Comode—5 drawers high.
Four other chairs about room.
Chair in hallway.
Newspaper.
Vase on davano table.
Vase on comode.
Framed photo of Mrs. Norris on consul table.
Two bouquets.
Bunch violets in box with ring-box containing engagement ring.
Drinking glass.
Small tray with four cocktail glasses.
Phonograph with records.
Revolver.

Bundle of letters.
Dress suit case.
Check.
Overalls.
Small manuscript of poems.
Large derby hat.
Small derby hat.
Small first aid kit:
 Cotton.
 Scissors.
 Adhesive tape.
 Small bottle peroxide.
Silver pocket flask.
Duplicate of flask with hole in it.
Wicker furniture on porch:
 Two chairs.
 Small table.
Humidor on end table:
 Cigar in same.
Matches on end table.
Sofa pillows; one bright red one.

LIGHT PLOT

Pink and amber foots.
X-Ray border; pink and amber.
2 Bracket lights with shield shades.
Hall lamp.
Small strip over arch to light hall.
6 Chinese lanterns hung from awning.

NOTE: *There are no light cues, everything is on when the curtain rises. As this is a comedy, give the scene plenty of light.*

There is a fancy lamp on the davano table, also one on the consul table.

DROP

HEDGE ROW

TILE FLOOR

AWNING

SILL

PORTIERE

CHAIR

SEAT

CHAIR

SOFA

TABLE

STOOL

ARM CHAIR

SOFA

TABLE

CHAIR

CHAIR

ARCH

CHAIR

TABLE

PLATFORM

CLOSET
BACKING

CLOSET DOOR

HALL BACKING

GOSSIPY SEX

SCENE FLOT

COME OUT OF THE KITCHEN

A charming comedy in 3 acts. Adapted by A. E. Thomas from the story of the same name by Alice Duer Miller. 6 males, 5 females. 3 interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

The story of "Come Out of the Kitchen" is written around a Virginia family of the old aristocracy, by the name of Daingerfield, who, finding themselves temporarily embarrassed, decide to rent their magnificent home to a rich Yankee. One of the conditions of the lease by the well-to-do New Englander stipulates that a competent staff of white servants should be engaged for his sojourn at the stately home. This servant question presents practically insurmountable difficulties, and one of the daughters of the family conceives the mad-cap idea that she, her sister and their two brothers shall act as the domestic staff for the wealthy Yankee. Olivia Daingerfield, who is the ringleader in the merry scheme, adopts the cognomen of Jane Allen, and elects to preside over the destinies of the kitchen. Her sister, Elizabeth, is appointed housemaid. Her elder brother, Paul, is the butler, and Charley, the youngest of the group, is appointed to the position of bootboy. When Burton Crane arrives from the North, accompanied by Mrs. Faulkner, her daughter, and Crane's attorney, Tucker, they find the staff of servants to possess so many methods of behavior out of the ordinary that amusing complications begin to arise immediately. Olivia's charm and beauty impress Crane above everything else, and the merry story continues through a maze of delightful incidents until the real identity of the heroine is finally disclosed. But not until Crane has professed his love for his charming cook, and the play ends with the brightest prospects of happiness for these two young people. "Come Out of the Kitchen," with Ruth Chatterton in the leading rôle, made a notable success on its production by Henry Miller at the Cohan Theatre, New York. It was also a great success at the Strand Theatre, London. A most ingenious and entertaining comedy, and we strongly recommend it for amateur production. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

GOING SOME

Play in 4 acts. By Paul Armstrong and Rex Beach. 12 males, 4 females. 2 exteriors, 1 interior. Costumes, modern and cowboy. Plays a full evening.

Described by the authors as the "chronicle of a certain lot of college men and girls, with a tragic strain of phonograph and cowboys." A rollicking good story, full of action, atmosphere, comedy and drama, redolent of the adventurous spirit of youth. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th Street, New York City
Our New Descriptive Catalogue Sent Free on Request

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Comedy in 3 acts. By James Montgomery. 5 males, 6 females. Modern costumes. 2 interiors. Plays 2½ hours.

Is it possible to tell the absolute truth—even for twenty-four hours? It is—at least Bob Bennett, the hero of "Nothing but the Truth," accomplished the feat. The bet he made with his partners, his friends, and his fiancée—these are the incidents in William Collier's tremendous comedy hit. "Nothing but the Truth" can be whole-heartedly recommended as one of the most sprightly, amusing and popular comedies of which this country can boast. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

SEVENTEEN

A comedy of youth, in 4 acts. By Booth Tarkington. 8 males, 6 females. 1 exterior, 2 interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

It is the tragedy of William Sylvanus Baxter that he has ceased to be sixteen and is not yet eighteen. Baby, child, boy, youth and grown-up are definite phenomena. The world knows them and has learned to put up with them. Seventeen is not an age, it is a disease. In its turbulent bosom the leavings of a boy are at war with the beginnings of a man.

In his heart, William Sylvanus Baxter knows all the tortures and delights of love; he is capable of any of the heroisms of his heroic sex. But he is still sent on the most humiliating errands by his mother, and depends upon his father for the last nickel of spending money.

Silly Bill fell in love with Lolo, the Baby-Talk Lady, a vapid if amiable little flirt. To woo her in a manner worthy of himself (and incidentally of her) he stole his father's evening clothes. When his wooings became a nuisance to the neighborhood, his mother stole the clothes back, and had them altered to fit the middle-aged form of her husband, thereby keeping William at home in the evening.

But when it came to the Baby-Talk Lady's good-bye dance, not to be present was unendurable. How William Sylvanus again got the dress suit, and how as he was wearing it at the party the negro servant, Genesis, disclosed the fact that the proud garment was in reality his father's, are some of the elements in this charming comedy of youth.

"Seventeen" is a story of youth, love and summer time. It is a work of exquisite human sympathy and delicious humor. Produced by Stuart Walker at the Booth Theatre, New York, it enjoyed a run of four years in New York and on the road. Strongly recommended for High School production. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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